The Knockers' Club

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THE KNOCKERS' CLUB

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BY

NATHANIEL C. FOWLER, JR.

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TO

THE PUDDINGSTONE CLUB
OF BOSTON

this book is affectionately dedicated.

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THE KNOCKERS' CLUB

The Knockers' Club

CHAPTER I

IF you haven't much to do, and don't care whether you do or don't, you may have noticed the conspicuous absence of a preface.

What's the use of it? If there's anything in this book,—anything worth reading or skipping,—you'll find it, or pass it, without an introduction.

I don't propose to show my full hand by starting in to describe my goods before you see them. Nor shall I begin with an apologetic foreword. That sort of thing has become conventionally chronic.

Why not for once have a book without a shame-felt preface to it?

Queer, isn't it, that so many folks knock the "know" out of what they know by discounting what they have to say before they say it?

Take them as they run. They begin with a seemingly bold, solar-plexus word-strike, fairly hurl it at the unprepared victim, then apologize for it, then shoot it off again, then take it back, then brace to it, and let it thrash itself about, forward, backward, and sideways, until the amazed and terrified reader

is prostrated. Whereupon the wordy warrior lifts him up with gentle hand, rests his head upon a downy pillow, feeds him with syrup and softness, only to knock him over again when he thinks he's safe, wonderfully intermingling blows and bandages, bruises and arnica.

If you've got something to say, or haven't, say it at the top of the page, italicize it or capitalize it, and let it stand, propped with the security of assurance.

Don't build a printed house and knock it down. The reader very willingly assumes that job.

For the foregoing expressed reasons, and for several more equally good, but not given, this book will be born without a preface, and die without an appendix. If I am ashamed of it, or do not know enough to be, why shout it from the book-tops?

Here's what is,—good, bad, or considerably worse; really worth while, somewhat so, or no good.

And you don't have to read it.

CHAPTER II

WHY did I write this book?

I was uninfected with the bacteria of a literary culture, and was more familiar with the pen that keeps books than with the pen that writes them.

The indisposition of my prosaic calling was not sufficiently chronic to suggest that I change from the mart of trading to the marketing of manuscripts.

Then, why did I ascend or descend to the plane of story writing, when I was a business man of dollars and sense, with a record of reasonable honesty and a reputation acceptable to both bank and trade?

Environment did it.

The desire to write came in a night. I didn't seek it or encourage it.

Free and clear, with a normally balanced mind, and with some sanity about me, I accepted the invitation of a friend,—a scrap-book compiler,—to be his guest at the semi-monthly social gathering of the Boston Branch of the Anglo-American Society for the Propulsion of Literary Progress.

I accepted the invitation, and drank the pale, anaemic, faded, pink tea, ball-and-hand soused into cups of the vintage of prehistoric pottery.

I listened to the twilight twitterings of pen-fed writers, whose grindings and rhymings refused to grow unless fertilized with printers' ink and protected by covers.

I was permitted to finger-tip with the authors of this and with the authoresses of that.

I mingled with the hewers of story and with the drawers of verse.

I heard the clatter of harvesting, but no suggestion of hoeing, or digging, or planting reached my optimistic ears.

The flowers of story and the perfume of verse saturated the air.

The room was lighted with cloudless sunshine and self-satisfaction awoke with incubator prolificness.

It was my first visit to the nest of authorship, where were laid the eggs which hatch into hard-shelled books and into soft-shelled magazines.

Between the draped windows, I met authors covered with Prince Alberts, because their everyday suits were shabby, and hat-wearing authoresses adorned in misfits of fancy.

I was impressed.

Around me were men and women, seemingly carefree, of good digestion, who appeared to be on excellent terms with themselves.

In the innocence of my ignorance, I said unto myself, "Why can't I,—plain, common, unlettered I,—

juggle words and toss sentences as well as do those about me, who, and I say it with malice toward none, didn't look, and didn't talk, as though they knew where what they said came from or where it was going to."

I had been, and was, an everyday sort of a fellow, known principally for the brand of my company cigars and for my ability to serve a luncheon or dinner appetizingly satisfactory to the innumerable friends who appreciated gratuitous hospitality, and who lived up to the twisted policy that it is far better to take what they can get than to give what they can keep.

I had inherited and developed a sense of business and of proportion, and didn't propose to run the literary gauntlet, with axes to right of me and axes to left of me, and the pit of unacceptance ahead of me.

I would apply business to literature, and handle the product of my mind as though it were a marketable commodity.

I wouldn't negotiate with publishers, as other authors do, who cast their manuscripts upon the literary sea, where the tide of luck ebbs as often as it flows.

I wouldn't leave it there, buoyed so that it wouldn't sink, and as fast as it was cast upon the beach of return, gather it up, row it out into the

open water again, throw it overboard, and let the erratic currents, the unreliable wind, and the somewhat dependable tide steer it at will.

I wouldn't allow it to call at strange harbors, to clear itself, and to float on and anon, until it reached the port of acceptance.

I wish to pause to give the reader plenty of time to become impressed with my marvelous manipulation of watery similes and salty metaphors. At every opportunity I propose to dive into the depths of the ocean and to spread typographical seaweed upon my pages. There's a go, and a roar, and an uncontrollability about the sea that appeals to me, and I shall never cease to encourage the billows to break the news of my story.

Instead of going to the publisher, I would force him to come to me.

My experience in handling the commodities of life, assured me that it was good business to let the other fellow take the initiative.

I would apply the sense of commercialism to the marketing of manuscripts. I would be a salesman of my own work; and, like the good seller, I would, by indirection, bring the buyer to me instead of going to him.

A while ago I was one of the "and other guests" at a banquet. The toastmaster in introducing me, at my own suggestion, for I never took chances when

I could control the situation, said: "Gentlemen, it gives me pleasure to introduce to you a man of whom it is said that Heaven help him when he approaches anybody and Heaven help those who approach him."

I would be the approachee and not the approacher.

I would create a demand for my goods, that the customer would ask for them and call for them by name.

I had a social acquaintance with several publishers, and incidentally had contributed smoking privileges to those supposedly necessary individuals, who are professionally known as publisher's editors, literary advisors, and diagnosers of the stuff that books are made of.

With a sensitiveness not born of literature, and by judicious manipulation, I had the extreme gratification of receiving a call from one of these gentlemen, who will not know, until he reads this manuscript, that he didn't come of his own volition.

CHAPTER III

I AM in the presence of the editor of my desired publisher; but not in his dusty, book-walled sanctum, where the saints and sinners of kiln-dried literature and moldy verse are sleeping peacefully between their yellowing paper sheets amid the stale air of Boston's petrifying exclusiveness.

He is in my office. I have him where I want him, where I, not he, is master of environment.

With an assurance, born of practice, he coolly selects a cigar from the bottom of my moistener box,—I was never able to get a full box together,—strikes one of my matches upon the bottom of my shoe, puts as much of his feet upon the top of my desk as there is room for, smokes in silence; and, after a while, takes another cigar, lights it, and remarks, with that familiarity which throws you off your balance: "Say, Joe, why don't you write a book of alleged humor?"

"Why 'alleged'?" I ask.

"Is there any other kind?" he questions.

I remain silent.

With a look of condescension, which there is no serum strong enough to dissipate, he resumes,

"Joe, the market is short on humor. We're glutted with essays, plotless fiction, studies of what-not and nothing, of the likely-to-be and the impossible, but there isn't sufficient funny stuff to stifle the cry for it."

I say nothing.

"Now, what we want is a series of live-wire shocks, —something that sputters because it's off its trolley. You're a sort of irresponsible genius, a three-quarter fool. Your mind is sprung, and your skull is leaky. But honestly, Joe, I believe that you can give us the kind of stuff that will sell."

"But I can't write," I reply, partly because I really have some misgivings, but largely that I may put up a show of modesty.

"Neither can the rest of 'em," he replies emphatically. "You don't have to say anything. Just collect a bucketful of words that are floating about, stir 'em up, spread 'em out, stick 'em together, any way but the right way, and there you are."

"Is that the prescription for compounding a book?" I query innocently.

"Not exactly a prescription, for a prescription is likely to be consistent, and consistency of all things must be avoided. Say, Joe," he continues, "why can't you do it?"

"But I never did it."

"So much the better. Your folly is all the more likely to be original. Because you don't know how to do it, you'll do it. Just hustle round, collect the débris of your mind, and of others who, like you, spill over, especially the sayings that are senseless, and the situations that even a miracle would hesitate to tackle. Write 'em out, hit or miss. Follow no rule. Copy nobody. Don't think, and maybe you'll make a ten strike."

All of a sudden he jumps to his feet.

"Joe!" he shouts, "I have it! Write up the Knockers' Club! Don't use all of the members, but pick out a fellow here and there, and run 'em together, say six in all. The members of that disorganization could get life-jobs in the cabinet of the Commander-in-Chief of Folly, if he needed help. A bigger bunch of self-idolizing idiots cannot be found in the combined asylums of incurables. Each and every member is an expert at something there isn't a market for. They're the crowning, capping climaxes of self-inflation and consummate conceitedness. You know Caxton?"

I nod.

"Well, he went to one of their meetings, wore his waving hair, his soup-absorbing mustache, his sheet-wide necktie, and his egg-etched vest. He took a long, lingering look at the crowd. Silently he withdrew, had a clean shave and a hair-cut, took his

clothes to the laundry, slit his necktie into seven pieces, and looked like other men."

"Why did he do it?" I inquire.

"I asked him," replies the editor, with a look that would have drawn sympathy from a Back Bay minister, "and he answered, 'What's the use?'"

"As I understand the situation," I say, "you want me to pick out five or six Knockers, dress and clean 'em up, set 'em on edge, attach strings and springs to 'em, and make 'em dance for the amusement of the public."

"No, that isn't just it. I suggest that you use some of the members as the basis for your characters, and that you take 'em as they are, without attempting to burlesque 'em. In the calm unconsciousness of their nakedness, they're funny enough. They don't need clothes, paint, or powder. It's an easy job I'm giving you to do. You won't have to create, build, alter, or repair. Just describe and repeat, that's all."

"But why don't you ask a professional writer to tackle the job. There's Maxwell, for example. He's a sort of perpetual Sapolio, so bright, so brilliant, that folks say he uses a metal-cleaner for polishing his face. Even brass looks like gold if you take care of it."

"No good," the editor replies decidedly. "Maxwell shines by brass alone. He has more conceit to

the cubic inch than the mystery-story writer carries to the cubic foot. He would interject into it some of the stuff he calls wit. He'd put his own jumble of words into their mouths. Just because a fool publisher offered to shove his manuscripts into daylight, if he'd put up a guarantee against loss, he thinks he's the biggest brilliant on the ring of fame. No Maxwell for me."

"How would Charlie Parr do?" I suggest.

"Jumping Jacks!" he exclaims. "Did you ever hear Charlie try to set off a joke some one had given him? It's painful. Even the joke weeps. He hasn't as much sense of humor as remains in a left-over scare-crow waving above a cornless field."

"There's Newton Cone. He has a reputation."

"For what, pray?"

"For manufacturing fun by the quart, pint, or glass, two-thirds foam."

"I told you, Joe," he replies, "I don't want to be the receptacle for the jokes that have been in can for twenty years. I want a man, not an author."

"You mean me?"

"Yes, you! You have no style of your own, haven't enough originality to be seen under a microscope, but you've a sort of unworked spontaneity that will allow you to show up a thing as it is, and not try to exhibit it as a monstrosity of your brain."

"Thanks!" I remark.

"I want something different, and you're different. You've nothing in common with authors. Your academic education is below par, you haven't been school-trained enough to have any prejudice or to be on friendly terms with the traditions. You're just an ordinary chump,—nothing distinctive about you,—a plain, mighty plain, man, with sufficient sense to do any kind of a job that you're told to do."

"Anything more I'm not?" I inquire, with due humility.

"This is business," he replies. "Business doesn't play favorities, nor lubricate the bearings with the oil of flattery. It speaks the truth when it's talking to itself. Come now, will you do it?"

"What's in it for me?"

"There you go, always thinking of financial gain! 'What's in it for you?' Fame, my boy, fame! Alongside of your superiors you will rest in our catalogue. Do you comprehend what that means? Of course not. But wait! You'll be alphabetically arranged in 'Who's It,' alongside of authors with publishers, statesmen with jobs, philanthropists on salary, and other notorious personages. Your name will appear all over the country. Photographers will snap-shot you, and copyright your pictures, and when you want to give a

reference, you won't have to write it out, but just sign your name, and say, 'See page 109 of "Who's It." ' You'll be a man of mark."

"You mean, a marked man."

"Don't interrupt, please. I offer you Fame, FAME! Opportunity may not pass through your street again. Better grab it while it's there."

I grab it.

The genuine beginning of my story occurs on the next page, under the caption of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THERE were six of us—the inner coterie of that circle of "differents" which composed what is known as the Knockers' Club of Boston, the only organization of its grade and kind of the past, of the present, and probably of the future.

The Knockers' Club is unique. Outsiders may describe it in a more strenuous way. It is made up of a conglomeration of men with as many minds, each conspicuously known as the farthest removed from his fellows. Yet this very difference of intellects, viewpoints, and characters binds the Knockers together with a fraternal cement which makes Masonic affiliation as unadhesive as is the gum on the flap of a twice-used envelope.

The Knockers' Club has no by-laws, no president, no code of rules, regulations, or principles. It is devoid of policy, and of all those attributes which seem to be necessary for the building up and holding together of the framework of organization, save an irresistible, unconquerable, ever-persistent desire to cast a melting pot which would stand the strain of any kind of combustible contents.

Its members,—absolutely no two alike and un-

dupeciable,—represent men who do things, not always the right thing, men who can't or won't get out of the lime-light, most of them geared-up cranks, each with a different speed.

But bless the cranks! If it were not for them, there would be nobody to turn the world around.

An unwritten, yet always lived-up-to, rule of the Club,—its only discipline, if it has any,—punishes a member, who, while at Club, treats his fellows with any apparent consideration, or speaks of another with even the suspicion of respect or admiration. Each member is a knocker, each wields a sword with a handle at both ends, which never maims nor wounds him who holds it nor him who is struck at.

It is obvious that this latitude gives each Knocker the untrammeled right to say what he pleases to his fellows, and to tell the unclothed truth about them, to the fullness of total nudity.

If anybody gets mad, he knows enough to keep still about it. The knocks are impersonal, though personally directed.

The Club holds monthly dinners or meetings, with a new presiding officer each time, who never sits at the head table, because there isn't any head table.

The season winds up with an outing, held at the country residence of some member, away from the criticising world, where, under the trees, are done

things and said things which never appear even in the appendix of the catalogue of convention.

Men with national reputations, tailed with a long line of degrees, vie with each other in getting down to the rock-bottom sub-soil of dissension. Burlesque circuses are held in sawdust rings, with a big banker for ring-master, and a minister and a lawyer for clowns. Representative pedagogues leave their pedagogy at home, and literally gambol on the green. Editors, who never smile elsewhere, here wear a perpetual grin. Sad, serious, and sedate judges slide off of the bench into the soft sand of the playground.

Such is the Knockers' Club, which gives opportunity for men of mind to give their heads a vacation, to let down the bars, and to run amuck once a month in the Club dining-room, and once a year in the open fields.

CHAPTER V

WITH the Knockers' Club as a whole I shall not deal. I shall select five of my special fellow members,—a club within a club,—and add the reader to their membership, that we may for a time travel together the paths of chance.

It would be discourteous not to introduce you to the other members of the cast, so I will give you a sort of condensed "Who's Who" of each of them. But let me say right here, that none of the miniature biographies has been revised by its principal. The truth of what I shall say about them is not guaranteed; but, honestly, it may be nearer to it than would be likely to occur if my biographies were their autobiographies.

Professor Archibald Rollins wouldn't like it if I didn't bill him at the head of the cast. Filled with a full self-appreciation of his wonderful powers of analysis, he sticks his head into the sand of his conceit, and vigorously wiggles his legs.

He's a psychological finder of reasons, one of those over-crammed freighters of pedagogical information, who refuse to say anything, or to do anything, or to think anything, until it is card-indexed

in the cells of their spongy brains, and has come unscorched from out the crucibles in their laborious laboratories.

Arch demands a reason for even reason itself. He reasons with reason until the reasonableness of reason becomes unreason. He has no patience with anything which will not bare itself to his analysis. He would turn his back on the sunset, if he were unable to fathom the stream of its lights and shadows, and trace it to it source. His nerveless glasses see no outside to anything, except as the outside mirrors the inside. The world, both material and immaterial, consists wholly of interiors and sources, created solely to give him opportunity to discover what each initial or subsequent impulse was at its inception, is now,—if it still lives,—and will be, if it doesn't die.

Arch would relegate everything without a pedigree to the junk-heap.

He deals in arrivals and departures, mainly, and has presents in stock only because the money-getting president of his college ordered his associates and assistants to carry the goods which the commerical contributors desired to have on sale in the class-rooms, where their notoriety was stamped upon the Chairs they paid for.

If Arch had green-apple stomach-ache, he wouldn't administer capsicum, or Jamaica ginger, or

bicarbonate of soda, or bismuth, or pepsin. He would attempt to locate the reason for the special wiggle of the particular brain cell which suggested green-apple stomach-ache in preference to any other kind; and when he had found it, he would run it backwards, that he might place his finger upon that pre-stomach-ache, controlling atom of the sub-conscious mind which seems to prefer that peculiar brand of physical pain that refuses to manifest itself except when encouraged into action by the internal application of green apples.

If you laughed at one of his jokes, he would take you and his joke to his laboratory, dissect you and the joke, and discover the reason why that particular joke affected you in a particular way at that particular time. He would reason it out that, if he had sprung that joke upon you an hour earlier or later, your reaction would have been just so many grams less or more pronounced.

Ask him about anything or anybody, from the fellow who discovered ether to the chap who wore the heavy-weight belt, and he'll tell you why the doctor wasn't a pugilist, and why the prize fighter wasn't a medicine-mixer. Psychology, to him, explained why the Sphinx won't talk, and why the suffragette does.

He has on tap a psychological solvent or reason

for every mystery, for why this is, and for why that is not.

One day, when we were rowing,—or, rather, I was, for Arch's psychology furnished a reason to him why I should row and why he shouldn't,—on a mountain-guarded lake, where the lights and shadows multiplied the primary colors, and threw a glowing atmosphere over land and water, I casually called his attention to the scene, and naturally used outdoor language in expressing myself. Like a flash he pounced upon me.

"Joe," he said, in that twice measured voice of his, which drives chips onto both of your shoulders, "you do not present the theme with any degree of scientific correctness. You speak of a 'medley of color.' 'Medley' is not the word to be used. I see around me a gathering together of the purples, the basic hue which predisposes to assert itself when sky, earth, and water meet in a conglomeration of prismatic intimacy."

I rocked the boat.

At another time, while he was parading a freshly dug-up reason for the reasonableness of rationality, I awoke long enough to ask him to give me a definition of psychology.

"Psychology," he said, "is the science or art of locating the locatable in any locality."

"I see," I replied, out of courtesy. "But what's the use of it?"

Arch lifted his foot to kick me, thought better of his foot, and replied, "Psychology enables even a chump like you to discover why you make an ass of yourself."

I brayed.

Arch immediately separated that bray into its component parts, worked it back into the dim past, and actually called its forebears by name.

CHAPTER VI

TOM appears next on the program. "Tom" is the only name he has. Whistle "Tom," and he comes to you. The directory prints him as simple "Tom." He signs his checks "Tom." Everybody calls him "Tom." Address him by the other end of his name, and he stares at you.

By number of years, Tom could have played old-man parts, but the world cast him as its leading juvenile. He looked the original Santa Claus,—a snow-capped mountain, with avalanches of white around the sides, his ears sticking out like red lights of conviviality.

Tom is an overgrown cabbage of good nature. (You know a cabbage is all heart.) He's a running stream of good-will for everybody, notwithstanding he's the champion, all-around kicker of the universe. He never agrees with anybody, including himself.

Tom's too contrary to have his own way. If he happens to decide upon a thing, he immediately whittles it into a chip, puts it upon his shoulder, and knocks it off. He will argue nothing into something, and reverse the process. And yet he lives on good terms with himself and with everybody else.

Tom's sunflower smile glows through the thin cloud of his anger. You can't get mad at him, for you don't want to; but, rather, have an irrepressible desire to stir him up. For Tom is positively beautiful when on the rampage.

In repose Tom reminds you of a jellyfish, basking in the wet sand,—motionless, thoughtless, and useless. But when he's kicking, he's the personification of cheerfulness, and actually reels with the intoxication of beneficence.

I have known Tom for thirty years. I first met him on his sixty-fourth birthday, and he celebrated his twenty-first birthday yesterday.

Tom was the only one of us who had swum the sad sea of sentiment. The rest of us were not only free and clear in the open present, but wore no scars of past disaster.

I do not mean to say that we were wholly girl-free, for none of us had any sustained prejudice against the sex that folks unfairly call fair, when it averages up to more than fair.

We have been seen in the company of women. Three times, one of us, well-chaperoned, accompanied a girl to a picnic held under the auspices of the Association for the Propagation of Prismatic Reflections, one of Boston's quadruple gross of organizations, which offer excuses for going out. and which have society seats for sale or to let.

Another of us rides every morning on the same train with a girl he can't avoid without being an hour late at his office. Still another of us belongs to a men's club largely attended by women. And another of us actually, premeditatedly, and with full realization of what he is doing, gives his sister an antiseptic kiss every other Sunday.

But none of us, save Tom, has had any working experience with women. Tom, forty-five years ago, was the skirt-binder of his town. He stood in the center of a ring of girls.

Who said that there is safety in numbers? Nonsense! Tom, at one and the same time, had on hand the options of sixteen girls of assorted sizes, classes, complexion, disposition, and financial embarrassments.

Tom has the distinction of being the inventor of the Lovers' Mailing Can. It consists of a syrup-proof receptacle of sufficient loading capacity to carry twenty-four quires of rose-colored and sachet-scented paper through the mails, without danger of leakage.

Years ago Tom had a dozen of them constantly in transit. He hasn't destroyed them, but keeps them still in a fireproof vault, directly under a net of sprinkling pipes, in fear of spontaneous combustion.

But Tom is cured. To-day he is a confirmed

bachelor; and yet,—dare I say it?—he may not be so securely man-locked that sometime some woman may not be able to pick him.

At this stage of the very pleasant game of playing the men I live with, I am undecided as to whether or not I will close my narrative with the plunging of Tom into the rock-filled torrent of love, and subject him to matrimonial punishment. Tom is a pliable chap, and would generously sail up and down the stream of sentiment, as a favor to me; but it may be wiser to let him remain where he is, and as he is, than to take chances with what might happen if I put even a silken halter around his neck, and drew in the slack.

I love Tom, and Tom loves me. Everybody loves Tom, and Tom loves everybody. When he kicks off his mortal legs, there will not be a church, nor a hall, big enough to hold half the people, who, for the first time, will see Tom in repose.

CHAPTER VII

ALLOW me the signal honor of introducing to you Walter Watson, editor-in-chief of the "Boston Morning and Evening Talkophone," a paper of much past and of considerable present.

The World couldn't help knowing Walt, or seeing him either. He's between six and seven feet in the perpendicular, with a corresponding circumference, and a great depth of diameter. His head is long, and as thick as it is long. His shoes are made on contract at the Fore River Ship Yards. His face resembles a full moon,—caused by the fullness of his good nature.

He walks with an artificial dignity, which he must wear or lose his job; for dignity, real or assumed, is a Boston journalistic commodity, and he who is unclothed with it is unfit to appear in the allied society of book-writing littérateurs, who would be nothing, if not particular to adjust themselves to the code of behavior which owes its stiffness to the straight-laced stays of confined refinement.

Walt is one of the few newspaper men who know more than how to write. Back of his flying pen is knowledge enough, and experience enough, and abil-

ity enough, to outweigh a gross of college-ground journalists, who write the words that soar, while their readers snore, and which are too light to tip a hair-trigged scale, and too fireless to burn a hole in phosphorescent lint.

In heart and mind, he is as simple as a man who is big enough to be simple. He is a wonder at word-fitting. Give him the least to write about, and he will make a page of it. All good stuff, too, for he can fit something into nothing, and make much out of little.

I've seen Walt build a city out of a cord of wood, and burn up a whole town with a broken match and nothing to strike it on.

Walt has the sweetest, simplest style. Words fairly pour off his fountain pen. (Walt uses a typewriter,—but why substitute for the hand-felt pen the hand-hit keyboard, which has a spring for a heart, just for the sake of writing the truth?)

Walt's versatility allows him to jump from dinner talk into convention, to elect his man before a roll call. He can clip for the "Only Woman's Page," as easily as he can dip into the prehistoric, and he can typographically prove that what seems to be is not, because it never was in the first place.

Walt has ascended to the mastery of every department of newspaperdom,—one round at a time,—getting there by the slow and never back-stepping

walk of that experience which has no patience with the man who jumps and spurts and falls exhausted on the road.

Modest as Walt is, retiring as he tries to be, he has one superlative boast,—one thing above all his other accomplishments which he hangs a red light upon, that all the world may honor him for the great thing he has not done, and for the tremendous sacrifice he has made: Walt stands on the pillar of undying and unreachable journalistic fame as the only newspaper man, the only wielder of a pen, who never wrote a rhyme and called it poetry.

CHAPTER VIII

THEN, there is Professor Benjamin Knowlton, manipulator of mechanics, direct descendant of a fatherhood of screws, belts, cogs, and wheels—of everything that turns around.

But the Professor is a scientist, not an engineer, one of those fellows who pour their lubricating oil on paper and wonder at the hot boxes.

Give the Professor a table of speeds and slow-downs, and he will run a locomotive off of the track. In his laboratory he has built shafts which will not move outside of a vacuum, and cranks that dead-center at the half-turn. His wonderful discoveries march on paper, and few of them do more than mark time on the road.

The Professor is long on theory, and short on practice; great in thought, and little in action.

Because the Professor knows so much, and accomplishes so little, he holds the chair of applied mechanics in one of our largest vocational shops, under the protective guidance of a coterie of egoistic educators, men who excavate curious curriculums from out of the depths of ancient earth, that they may raise the yeasty youngster of to-day with the left-over leaven of yesterday.

Nevertheless, Professor Knowlton's great lumbering load of theory isn't without a use. He's not a failure. What he doesn't know how to use, he generously gives to others, and many a holder of a throttle saves oil and fuel because of what the Professor has told him.

The real man, all-man, super-man of the crowd, however, is Donald Bennett,—thin of scholastic education, but thick with sense. He isn't a professor of anything and not a degree tags his name. He never received a wireless from the world of applied or unapplied science. He doesn't even know that Latin is the vernacular of Boston boarding-house keepers, and he hasn't discovered why the classic management of the Boston Elevated road requires its conductors to belch forth the call that "Passengers must leave by the *nearer*," and not by the *nearest*, "door."

Don has heard of Tyndale, Voltaire, Galileo, and others of their strain, but can't tell you what nine they pitched for. He never inhabited a university of misapplied football. He can't distinguished a frater from a flatter. He knows that Milton wrote rhymes, but isn't sure whether Browning was a poet or a polluter of English. He is the only Bostonian extant who hasn't a desire to straddle the fourth dimension.

Don is a plain, simple business man, a worker

not a shirker, a member of that grand army of laborers in the ever-growing field of industry, a constant and persistent harvester of the seeds of science, who plants them, waters them, grows them, and sells them, without a thought of their origin.

Yet Don is a man of education, of practical learning. The little he knows of books, he knows how to use. He is a brilliant conversationalist, witty, and has the keenest sense of humor. But his pre-eminent characteristic is his abundance of solid, pressed-down common sense, the kind that is never out of work.

I'm number six,—the poor, deluded chap on the job of recording the sayings and doings of this bunch of good fellows, each in his own boat, but all sailing on the same sea; each guiding his own craft, but never failing to get together at night, to tie up at a common anchorage, and there exchange calls and rations, while the gentle water rocks them in its cradle of fraternal restfulness.

CHAPTER IX

WE were seated at the Round Table at our common club. I was the unelected chairman of the group. I carried an axe instead of a mace.

"Boys," I said, "let's pool our available funds, take a grip apiece, get together, and together do time at simple summering. We'll have no program. We'll start for nowhere, and when wet get there, we'll go somewhere else."

"Those in favor of Bennett for treasurer will say 'Aye,' " said Don.

"No!" yelled the crowd.

"The Ayes have it," declared Don, in that peremptory tone of voice which welcomes no opposition.

"I move, Mr. Chairman," said the Professor, "that the rest of us act as managers-in-chief."

"Those opposed say 'Yes,' " I called, with the dignity of a presiding officer.

"No!" was the unanimous vote.

"Carried," I announced.

"I move that Walt dictate a program," said Don.

Walt never wrote, he dictated. He furnished the nouns, and his nerve-strained stenographer filled in the other parts of speech.

"Not much!" ejaculated Tom. "We're to go as

we please. No plan, no expectations, no disappointments,—just start and go."

"That's all right," Don interrupted, "after we're under way. But if we start for nowhere and get there, we'll still be at nowhere. I agree to a go-as-you-please itinerary, but whether you will or not, somebody must pick out a place to begin to get at."

"Well, let's go somewhere," conceded Tom.

"What railroad is it on?" queried Arch seriously.

"How do you get there?" asked Walt.

"Is there anything to eat there?" interrupted Don.

"Always thinking of your stomach!" interjected Tom. "Why can't you locate your senses above your belt once in a while?"

"And be different from the rest of you?" asked Don quietly.

"Say, boys," broke in Tom, "I'll tell you how to fix it. Send the waiter for the railroad guide, and we'll cut for it."

"Great!" exclaimed Walt.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Arch. "There's no psychology to hit or miss. What we're about to do is a serious matter, and all matter must be weighed and analyzed, that we may know how to take it and use it, and safeguard ourselves against telescoping with it."

"Pshaw!" said Walt. "We don't want reason. If we had it, we wouldn't know what to do with it. I'm sick of plans and premeditation. I don't propose to abide by schedules or time tables."

"You'll get left," interjected Don.

"'Spose we do?" replied Walt. "As we haven't anything to do, we can have lots of fun doing nothing, and the most restful place in all the world is the depot waiting-room. Your idea of cutting for it," he continued, turning to Tom, "hits me, for then we can feel that we are led, not leading, and the led doesn't need to have any mind, sense, reason, discrimination, or discretion."

"Walt," remarked Arch, with apparent sincerity, "you have less sense than a heartless eel. If you had a cold in your head, I'd prescribe a vacuum cleaner for its cure."

"After you, Arch," retorted Walt. "The cleaner wouldn't have to work overtime attending to your needs."

Arch didn't reply. As there is no psychology to a vacuum cleaner, it was beyond him, and he had nothing to say.

The waiter brought in one of those stuck-together sheets of unguaranteed departures and arrivals, which are as mysterious to the fellow who threw them together as to the unfortunate chap who fools himself in believing that they were intended to

aid one in ascertaining when to start, how to get there, and at what approximate time he is likely to arrive at his destination.

Tom ran a table knife into it.

"We'll take the left-hand page," he said. He opened the book.

"Promiston wins," he announced. "The boat leaves at nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

There was no help for it. The knife of fate had carved out our destination.

CHAPTER X

WE met at the wharf some minutes ahead of time,—all except Arch. He reached it just as the gang-plank had been pulled in, made a leap, struck the deck hands down, picked himself up, glared at the grinning passengers, looked at his watch, and turned with scorn upon the purser, exclaiming, "You started ahead of schedule, sir!"

"You're mistaken, my friend," replied the gilt-bespangled official politely. "We pulled out five minutes late."

"I do not retract," snarled Arch. "Look at my watch, sir. It lacks five minutes of nine o'clock. I had five minutes' leeway. What have you to say about that, sir?"

The officer glanced at Arch's watch. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said softly, but decidedly, "but may I not call your attention to the fact that your watch went to sleep last evening, sir? It has stopped, sir."

Arch was face to face with the time and truth.

"I apologize," he stammered, as he offered his hand to the purser.

"That's all right, my dear sir," replied that of-

ficial. "I'm used to it. You're the twelfth man today with a run-down timepiece."

Arch detached himself from us for a while. He went below, leased a stateroom, took off his coat, stretched out upon the lower berth, placed a stethoscope on his shell-like skull, and for an hour attempted to locate the particular brain throb that was responsible for forgetfulness, not general absent-mindedness, but that special brand of brain paralysis that manifests itself by producing that preoccupation of cerebral activity which prevents the fifteenth nerve from carrying the watch-winding impulse from the time-controlling cell to the hand which makes time move by keeping a timepiece going.

Having discovered it, Arch tied a string around it, lighted a pipe, which was stronger than the bravest tobacco, and joined his fellows.

Don, with his power of corralling opportunity and making it offer him a seat, had buttonholed the captain. He gave him an appreciative salute. He uttered a few words, so carefully guarded that the blue-coated official didn't discover that Don's knowledge of things marine was limited to ferry voyages, and really felt that he may have been a retired coplower of excursion water. A real salter has an exaggerated respect for the fellow who has sense enough to turn from salt water to watered stocks,

and any ex-sailor, who has hit the land sucessfully, is a hero in the eyes of the seafaring chaps, who would rather, many times over, brave the fighting elements offshore than take their chances with an inland breeze.

In five minutes he and Don were chums. Don introduced us. The captain invited us into his cabin, which looked like the reception room of one of these suburban flats, so constructed that one couldn't squeeze into it, nor get out of it, unless he was girdled with shoe horns smirched with vaseline. Sardinelike we stored ourselves within.

The captain appeared to be one of the brightest ornaments in that great galaxy of water-polished stars, which would have shone on land, if somebody had, at their formative age, placed them in a solid setting. He wasn't a product of a marine school upon paper. He had learned to steer by steering, not by pricking out a course for a paper ship upon a paper chart. He was before the mast before he stood aft of it. He had kept many a wind-jammer afloat before he was introduced to a craft big enough to have a pilot house. He had sailed before and after the wind and storm. He knew the eccentricities of water and wave, and had won many a battle against the elements when they were lashing the vessel he commanded.

A manly man was this captain, unless appearances

were contradictory, a representative of that kind of courage and heroic hardiness which sometimes may be permitted to compete successfully with the money-making land lubbers who walk dry-shod upon financial shores.

Here was a man trained to conquer Nature in all her moods, a commander of a little sailing world, floating 'twixt sea and sky; and yet his financial competence was exceeded by the pay drawn by a million players upon the roulette of business. Why? Because convention's inspector of weights and measures isn't onto his job.

But enough of this sort of thing. The publisher's editor looms large over my horizon, and I see his financial finger pointing to the literary policy that pays.

Sometime I'm going to write a book to please the writer of it. I'm going to dip my pen in the fountain of my own brain, and let it trace out upon paper what's in me, without a single reservation, if—if I ever get money enough together to be my own publisher's editor and publisher in one.

"Come into the pilot house, gentlemen," said the Captain. "We're in sight of the monument, and you'll get a good off-shore view of it as we near the land."

We followed him,—all but Arch. During the animated conversation, both fresh and salt, but

mostly brackish, he kept within the cracked shell of himself, quietly reason-hunting for something which probably had its reason sticking out all over it. When he entered the pilot house, I saw at once that he was straining over some problem or other.

"What is it?" I asked, for I knew that Arch loved the man who asked.

"Joe," he said, "I am much perplexed. As a scientist I could not bring myself to pass through the door leading from the Captain's cabin to the pilot house until I had obtained an inside view into the composition of the ship carpenter's mind, which suggested that he hang that door so that it would swing cabinward instead of the other way."

"Did you find it?" inquired Walt, while the Captain looked at Arch and said nothing, though the look fairly beamed interrogation points.

"He's all right," explained Don. "Just mentally twisted, that's all."

"Isn't that enough?" inquired the Captain innocently.

"You don't understand, Captain," replied Don, with a good imitation of the voice he used when he had to convince an ambitious clerk that the salary he was giving him corresponded with the convenient depression in business. "Rollins is a psychologist, Captain."

"What's that?" inquired the Captain, with renewed interest.

"A psychologist, my dear Captain," resumed Don, "is a—a—a—well, he's something new. They got the germ of him at the Carvard laboratories a few years ago, and introduced it into the public schools; and, well, that's what he is—a psychologist."

"Is he dangerous?" asked the Captain.

"Oh, dear, no!" Don assured him. "He's safe, if he isn't sane. He has his lucid moments, particularly when he's eating. No psychology about his appetite. I fed him once *à la carte*. But only once. It's cheaper to *table d'höte* him."

The Captain smiled, and maybe he understood; for no popular and successful commander of an excursion steamer refuses to give a reciprocating grin when something which the sayer thinks is bright is thrown at him.

"Boys," said Tom, with a visible twinkle in his eye, "Arch may be on the brink of a discovery which will regulate the swinging doors of posterity. At last, he's got down to wood. I, for one, request that he give us a résumé of his conclusions. Why did the hanger of that door give the cabin the preference by swinging it that way, when to all intents and purposes, if viewed from a broad, unprejudiced standpoint, there would appear to be no adequate reason

why it shouldn't have opened into the pilot house, instead of taking up room in the cabin.

"In the answer to this awful problem may lurk the solution of all that goes into a door and surrounds a door, may cover not only the casing, but the whole room it swings into and the abutting room it neglects, and from these rooms spread itself over the house, and from the house run about outdoors, and tackle the neighbors' houses, and their yards, and even get into the street, and run amuck, and then on and on and anon. Here's an opportunity to check its ravages, to prevent the dire disaster. The time has come when we must pretect ourselves against the raging door and its anarchistic swing. Give us your conclusions, Arch. You may have arrived at something. Out with it."

"Go ahead," interposed Walt. "Maybe you've butted against something worth while. Your reasoning may have got alongside of the original reason. Let 'er go."

Arch unhinged himself. He ran fact backward until he swept into its very source. He swam into a scientific analysis of the subservient forces that spend themselves in door-swinging. He wiped the grit off the hinges, collated the influences which accelerate and retard the atmospheric pressures, spread them out before us, and was about to match them into result, when the captain broke in:

"Say, you chump of a psychologist, don't you know that that door swings both ways?"

But Arch kept on. A pile-driver, working horizontally, hadn't force enough to knock him down when he is braced and stimulated with the spirit of psychology.

We left him, glued to that door, mumbling to himself, and heard him mutter, "I will locate the reason why it swing more readily one way than it does the other, if I spend the rest of my life on shipboard!"

With the whole town on the dock to meet us, we tied up to it, and in a few minutes we were in the vortex of a swarm of hotel runners, each representing the only hostelry where real food was served in sufficient quantities to combat an acquired appetite.

"Dine at the Relay House!" bellowed a white-capped runner. "Get more than you can eat for fifty cents!"

"Let's go there," said the Professor.

"Why have more than you can eat?" queried Arch seriously.

"Free 'bus to Hotel Fish!" yelled a coatless individual, shod in both black and tan. "A dollar dinner for thirty-five cents!"

A man next to him shouted through a megaphone, "Clams, clams, clams, at the New York Restaurant!

—Steamed clams, fried clams, clam chowder. All for forty cents!"

"Pies that mother can't make at the Hotel De Liver!" burst from out the never-meeting lips of a tall, gaunt, lank, bean-pole sort of man. "Turn to the left! Forty-fifth door! Look for the green sign. A full stomach for seventy-five cents!"

We paused. With all of them the best, who should decide?

There's a legend about town, that many years ago a man starved to death on the wharf, because he couldn't make up his mind which of the only dining places to go to.

"Let's toss for it," suggested Walt, and he did. The green one won.

We turned to the left and entered a typical Cape Cod feedery, with living room in front, kitchen at the back, and dining room wedged in between. The typewritten bill of fare didn't belie what it stood for.

Clams were ripe at the Green House. There was clam chowder made of clams, and real potatoes in it, more than a suggestion of an onion, and a chunk of salt pork for flavoring, with every plate. Then came the clams in their original shells,—not the clams you see at some places, where the clammer gets them in can, and sets them into a set of shells, which he uses over and over again.

And there was beef, cooked both in frying-pan

and oven, and mutton, and two or three salads, four kinds of pie, one kind of pudding, ice cream and coffee.

Perhaps the landlord procures his food for nothing, and forgets to pay his help. He either does, or else his Knocker guests are not in the majority. We ate, and ate again, and re-ate. When the waiter asked us what we would have, Don, without a smile on his face, or the twitch of an eyebrow, handed one of the bills of fare to her, and calmly remarked, "Bring us that, and repeat."—And she did.

CHAPTER XI

DID you ever visit Promiston? If not, do. The very air is salty, and the unbridled breezes sweep across the town in a continuous flow of coolness, so dissipating the heat that it gets no chance to hit you, save in spots.

Promiston is the beckoning finger-tip of Cape Cod's cordiality. Along its half-circle of shore stand the dwelling places of more than four thousand regulars, and rooms to let for as many more. Its two long and parallel streets are irregularly crossed by lanes and footpaths, unlined with sidewalks, but abutted with front and back yards, or more frequently by no yards at all.

Harbor Street, the main artery of the town, runs from east to west for two miles in fact, but for fifty per cent. more if you believe the horsed-vehicle and the springless auto-truck drivers, who carry you from where you get on to where you get off for a nickel, and give you the circuit ride for a dime.

To the sky eye, Promiston looks like irregular billows of sand swept by the erratic wind, here and there kalsomined with patches of struggling grass and Lilliputian trees. In its beginning some unsys-

tematic builder had apparently shaken up a colanderful of houses, and sifted them upon the sand.

In the center of the village, on its only real hill, a tall monument looks staringly down upon you, with a scowl of solid granite. Long, lank, and underfed piers stick out from the land into the harbor, and fishing smacks, and samples of all the craft that float, rest upon the bosom of the tranquil water.

(For key to the foregoing description, see "Ready-Made Scenes and How to Write About Them," written by one who worked in a gazetteer factory, made up indexes, lengthened out populations, and cast descriptive words into interchangeable lines.)

That evening we got together upon the back piazza, overlooking the vessel-dotted harbor, to see the evening fall, and to watch the lights on sea and shore. The scene,—the very softness of the twilight,—made the world seem like the major half of a cyclorama painted by the Master, Nature, defying the brush of artist,—save the crayons of the mobs of girls in kimonas, and men in kakhi, who, under the baiting of a money-making leader, easelized the quaint nooks and corners of the town, and, with the presumption of ignorance, caricatured the splendors of the sea, and its bordering sand, upon placques and friezes, condensing the limitless ocean and its shores into foot squares of spattered paint.

We had hardly begun our usual evening dispute when there shambled upon us one of those genuine net-casters of the fishing banks, dressed in the comfortable and loose-fitting trousers which are never seen hanging upon the frames of the fish-catchers of canvas or story. There was not a pinch of salt connected with him, so far as appearance indicated. He looked like anybody, and might have been taken for an ex-teamster, or a digger of the soil, for, in fact, there was more earth than water attached to his person.

"Howdy," he drawled.

"Good evening, Captain," said Don politely, "won't you join us?"

Here again Don displayed his diplomacy, his natural and acquired ability to strike twelve every time he spoke. There wasn't an eighth of a chance in eight million that the man had ever been a captain, or had occupied any position beyond that of untangling nets, casting them, and pulling them in. But nobody objects to a title which doesn't belong to him, if it is above him, and if there is even the slightest suspicion that the fellow who hands it to him may have thought it appropriate.

"I hain't got no 'jection," the fisherman replied. "Be yer calkerlatin' to anchor here fer long?"

"Can't say," replied Don, "but we'll be here for a spell anyway."

"Come up from Boston-way?" interrogated the sailor.

"Yes."

"Thought so. I can ginerally tell a Boston crab by the look o' him."

"There!" interjected Arch, "didn't I tell you so! Here is a man, a stranger to all of us, and yet he has the intuition to locate our home environment at a glance. I have always contended that dwellers of any distinct locality reflect an effluence which the discerning eye of even those entirely removed from any familiarity with the application of recondite reasoning could not fail to recognize. My friend," he said, turning to the fisherman, "by what process of reasoning, by what assembling of initial impulses, did you discover the place of our residence?"

"Watcher gettin' at?" ruminated the native.

"I simply intended to ask you," resumed Arch, "to give me a single reason, or a combination of reasons, one or many, which started in motion the cerebral impulses which enabled you to locate instantaneously our abiding place in contradistinction to placing us as inhabitants of some locality which does not possess, except in general, the lights and shades of our local coloring, and the peculiar and somewhat exclusive characteristics of those who have been fed and nourished upon the nutriment, which, although it resembles the common food of

mankind, is distinctly seasoned with that special and somewhat exclusive condiment which has a distinctiveness essentially its own——"

"Beans!" interjected Walt, with journalistic irreverence.

Arch was about to reply forcibly to Walt, when Don came to the rescue.

"Cap'n," he said, "what Dr. Rollins wants to know is why in thunder you took us for Bostonians."

"Oh, that's an easy one," returned the Captain. "I doesn't hit it wrong, 'cept when I'm sleepy. Yer see, I bumps up alongside of lots of peoples, and gets to a sort o' sortin' 'em, same as we picks out fish. Each one of 'em is different from the rest of 'em. Can't tell just how I does it, but I knowed you fellers was from Boston soon as I sets eyes on yer. 'Cause why? Yer talk too all-fired like 'em Boston school marms we git here when we can't do better. Yer look as though yer knowed a blamed sight more about what's knowed than what it's good fer."

I kicked the Professor, and he reciprocated.

"I doesn't go to mean no hard feelings to yer," continued the Captain apologetically, "'cause yer're all right, such as yer be. But any feller that's knocked round as I has can't steer crooked when he sights things like yer be. Why, let loose

my tow-line, yer talk gives yer away. It hain't natural-like. Yer don't say what's what, as though yer knowed what yer were talkin' 'bout. Yer jist spill out a lot o' stuff that hain't no good fer bait, nowhere. Now, I hain't goin' to say yer hain't no good in yer place, 'cause most likely yer be, but yer Boston folks sure thing."

"In the language of acute frankness, then," said Tom, "we are plain damn fools net."

"Well, seein' yer say it, I hain't agoin' to 'spute yer," replied the Captain. "But doncher care. Yer hain't goin' ter be lonesome a bit. There'll be shoals like yer here all summer. Sometime it seems to me, it do, that this here town be overrun with what yer call idecaters; but I can't seem to get used to yer ways, 'cause I come from folks that don't go to put on the lugs yer city peoples have got. I beg yer pardon, gents, fer maybe I was too outspoken-like. But, says I, what am the good of bein' whatcher hain't, when yer've got to be whatcher be? Then, says I, if yer be whatcher be, yer've got to speak right out in meetin' what's inside of yer."

"Captain!" exclaimed Walt, giving him a hearty slap on the back, "you're the sort of fellow I like to cuddle to. Always lived here?"

"Yes, ever since I was born," replied the Captain, "'cept when I was afishin'."

"Then you know all about Promiston?"

"Reckon I does."

"Can you locate the spot where the Pilgrims landed?"

"Maybe I can, an' maybe I can't," replied the Captain, as he crammed a quarter of a pound of black tobacco into a pipe large enough to be used for a drinking cup.

"Yer see it be this way. Ole Cap'n Bill, he say they pulled up on his land. And Deacon John, who got a hotel half a mile to the eastard, he say they got out o' their boats within twenty foot of his dining room. Now, it don't seem nateral that they could 'ave made two fust landings, an' if they did, it's likely they got out pretty nigh to the same spot. There's Cap'n Bill's place down there," and he pointed to a yellow shed some distance away, with "Fish For Sale" painted upon its roof. "And there's Deacon John's boarding-house right up there, not more'n a cable's length from where we air."

"But, Cap'n," asked Tom, "if, as you say, they couldn't very well have made two first landings, which of the places do you think they landed at?"

"Well," drawled the Captain, "I kind er lean Cap'n Bill's way. Yer see, he hain't more'n half as big a liar as Deacon John be, and the Deacon, consarn 'im, tried to sell me a horse which wasn't no

clipper, you bet, and heeled like hell when he wasn't propped up."

"Have a cigar, Captain," said I, offering him my cigar case.

"No, thank ye," the Captain replied, "not meanin' I don't thank ye for yer kindness, but somehow I never could get any real smokin' out of the tobac they put into them cigars. Don't appear like I was asmokin'."

So saying the Captain ambled off.

"Let's take a walk," suggested Walt. "The town's a quaint old place, and worth seeing."

We started in columns of twos, Walt and Tom in the van.

But what of it? We were but treading the much traveled paths which by accident received the sore feet of those who made history, largely unintentionally, and mostly because they happened to be on the firing line at the time when the discipline of gun and sword commanded sea and shore, and men fired first and thought about it afterward.

Promiston is overstocked with historical fact and mysterious legend. If the rain hadn't soaked the sand, and the wind hadn't swept it into irregular piles, since the gun-carriers passed away, we could have seen the countless footpaths, marking the by-ways of historical lore, and the localities of the

forgotten exploits of the men we reverence because they happened to be on earth ahead of us.

In building their necessary shacks to live in, they couldn't avoid creating the history they didn't care whether they made or didn't. Truly, the gore of the past turns to glory when sifted through the filtering ages.

CHAPTER XII

"LET'S take a sail," suggested Tom, as we inadvertently found ourselves upon one of the mile-long wharves, upon which, half a century ago, a hundred wives welcomed their husbands at the home-coming of those ships and barks which battled with wind, wave, and whale.

Tied up to one of the piles was a trim little motor boat, named "To Let." But no skipper was in sight.

"Where's the fellow who runs it?" inquired Walt, of seventeen do-nothings, who sat upon as many idle barrels, smoking away the hours they didn't have any use for.

"Guess you'll find him at Baxter's shop," replied one of the loafers. "If he hain't there, he may be, likely as not, standin' up agin a telegraph pole in front of the fish market; and if you don't catch him there, shouldn't wonder if you'd find him watchin' them street fixers somewhere between Smith's grocery store and the sail loft that used to be where it was before it burned down. And if you don't run afoul of him at any of them places, you're likely to hit him at his house, which is half way between the white church and t'other church."

We started to find him, when Arch, with great presence of mind, and with a display of intelligence which was not his usual wont, asked, "What's his name?"

"Harker," drawled the loafer, "and be sure you ask for Hank Harker," he added, "because them Harkers is as thick as sand flies round here, and not one of 'em 'll tell you nothin' about t'others, 'cause them Harkers don't hitch."

"Arch," said Tom, grasping his hand in a firm grip, "accept my sincere, unfettered, and unlimited congratulations. At last, and for the first time, you've helped out. You, of all of us, rose magnificently to the occasion, and of your own volition, and without any other than motor suggestion, asked a pertinent question, which, if it had remained unanswered, would have kept us skipper-hunting for a week. In the name of your fellows, I thank you."

"Say, Arch," said Don, "you're getting down to bed-rock. I didn't think you had it in you. Shake, old boy,"—and we all solemnly shook hands with him.

At last we found Hank, but in none of the localities so minutely described by our informant. He was leisurely leaning against a post in front of an empty freight car, patiently waiting for a truck, which hadn't started, to arrive with a load which was to be shipped by rail.

"Captain Hank Harker?" inquired Don.

We always allowed Don to take the initiative, for somehow he seemed to carry a stock of available discrimination and diplomacy, and was less likely than the rest to put his foot into it when he opened his mouth.

"I'm him," said Hank. "Whatcher want?"

"Are you the proprietor, engineer, and navigator of yonder craft of gasoline?"

"I'm the fellow that runs her, if that's what yer want. Want to go out?"

"We want to hire her for a few hours. What are your terms?"

"Five dollars for a spell," said Hank. "But I can't go out with yer to-day. Doc Hallock's got a load of furniture going to Sandville, and I've got to see the stuff's put onto this here car so it won't break up agittin' there."

We looked our disappointment.

"Boys," said the Professor, "let's charter the boat. I'll run the motor, and Joe'll navigate her."

We put the proposition up to Hank, but he didn't respond with alacrity. He took a long, scrutinizing look at us, twirled his fingers, and looked again, and, after sizing us up several times, he shook his head.

"Hain't goin' to risk her," he snapped decidedly. "You'd run into somethin'."

"Captain Harker," said Don, with that quiet dignity that would make a paying teller cash his check without identification, "we're responsible men of Boston. Mr. Gregory here" (he came near to saying Tom) "is one of our most substantial citizens, and would have been elected the president of four banks if others hadn't received the votes. Mr. Watson is the leading journalist of the universe, a writer of words which have to be written upon asbestos paper. Mr. Conrad here" (I'm he) "is a licensed pilot." (And I was, for years ago I had to take out a license if I would run my twenty-foot dory with an engine in her, and for the fun of it I had renewed the license every year, for it gave me opportunity to impress the sea-faring ability I didn't own upon those who knew more about the sea than I did, but didn't know that I didn't know as much about it as they did.)

"Professor Knowlton," Don continued, "is the head-in-chief of the engineering department of our largest institute of applied mechanics, the inventor of the famous Knowlton carburetor, which returns to the tank ten per cent. more gasoline than it takes out. And that squint-eyed, long-distance gazer is the occupant of the Chair of Vacancy, at the College of Premature Psychology."

Hank stared at us. Giving his trousers a double hitch, and pulling himself and them together in one

mighty struggle, he exclaimed, "Well, if yer be all that, reckon I won't be runnin' no big risks to let yer have her. Go ahead."

We started for the wharf.

"Hold on!" yelled Hank. "I hain't agin' to be scared, but if yer've got the coin about yer, would yer mind handing me a couple of dollars, 'cause I could use 'em, maybe, afore yer get back."

Don gave him two bright, new, silver dollars.

We boarded the "Sarah S," for that was the name of the craft. I took my place in the bow, as commander of the expedition.

"Cast her off!" I called, with the dignity of a past master. Nobody stirred.

"Let go that line!" I yelled to Tom.

"Not much!" he returned lazily. "I'm a passenger."

I threw a wet sponge at him, so big that it couldn't miss its mark. While he was wiping the mud and water off his neck, I turned to Walt.

"Can't do it," replied Walt, pleasantly, "for I'm Tom's guest, and guests don't work."

I made a remark.

"Get a move on, Don!" I shouted.

"Sorry," he replied, "but the manager cannot consistently assist in the navigation. His province is confined to the manipulation of the finances."

I made another remark.

"Arch," I said humbly, in desperation, "may I trouble you to so forget yourself as to let go that line at your earliest convenience?"

Arch started for the line. Instead of unfastening it from the wharf end, so that we could take it with us, he drew out his knife, and deliberately cut the rope where it was spliced into the cleat. I didn't stop to express my opinion of his stupidity. The boat was clear. That was enough for the present.

I turned to the Professor. Then I said calmly, for by this time I realized that my crew had little respect for its commander, "It gives me great pleasure to inform you that all is in readiness for the start; and that I would be pleased to have you let her go at your earliest convenience."

"Aye, aye, sir," replied the Professor; exhausting his marine vocabularly as he spoke. "Want to go ahead, or shall I back her?"

"Suit yourself," I replied.

The Professor opened all the valves near him, made a remark, jerked the switch at "on," then gave the fly wheel a twitch, and repeated the operation several times. Fortunately she was set for going ahead.

We started at full speed. I missed a couple of sailing craft by an eighth of an inch, when she stopped.

"What did you do that for?" I yelled at the Professor.

"None of your business!" he snapped. Who's running this machine, you or I?"

"Neither," I replied.

The Professor grabbed an oil can with one of those giraffe necks to it, aimed it at me, and let me have a gallon more or less of the lubricant right on the starboard cheek. For the sake of getting it started, I reserved my substantial response.

The Professor sat for ten minutes (it seemed an hour) staring at the motor, but not a cock nor anything else did he touch. He was no longer with us, but away off, somewhere far distant, in the realm of thought and theory. The engine had stopped. His scientific mind realized only too well that nothing going will stop moving unless there is a more powerful force favoring the discontinuance of its motion than the propelling energy predisposed to its continuance. His academically trained mind, which had over-worked in the sweat-shops of mechanics, refused to allow him to permit the boat to start, even if it would of its own volition, until he had scientifically unraveled the mystery of the stoppage. It would be unscientific and unethical to make a material investigation, or to do anything else of a practical nature, until he had pricked out on the

chart of his learning that chain of circumstances which was responsible for the delay.

Arch was studying the Professor's face. The stopping of the motor didn't disturb him, for the Professor's perplexity offered an opportune opportunity for the keenest study of mental moods and reactions.

"Professor," remarked Tom, "why don't you give her more oil? Maybe she's thirsty."

Not a word from the Professor.

"Say, Professor," interjected Walt, "perhaps she'd go if you turned your face the other way."

Still the Professor remained silent.

"Think you quite understand your job?" asked Don, innocently.

The Professor leaped out of lethargy. He arose to his feet. "Shut up! you grinning apologies for men!" he shouted. "Don't know how to run a measly little machine like this!—I, who have invented a dozen appliances which have revolutionized the motor world!"

"Ever had anything to do with getting up a start?" inquired Tom quietly.

Tom dodged in time.

For thirty long minutes the Professor stared at that motor, assisted by the remarks of all of us, even Arch warming up at him. The sun burned our faces and inflamed our dispositions. Science was

all right when there wasn't any need of going anywhere; but sitting still in an open boat, with only our hats 'twixt us and the sun, was not conducive to the highest state of contentment, and contributed nothing to bodily comfort.

Just then a fisherman, in his unpainted dory, was about to cross our wobbling bow.

Don hailed him. "Boat ahoy!" he shouted.

"Busted?" inquired the navigator, fisherman, and engineer all in one.

"Yes," yelled Don. "Come aboard, won't you?"

The fisherman jerked his tiller to port, kicked off his sparking connection, and was with us in a moment.

"What's holding yer?" he inquired.

"Don't know," answered Tom, "but somehow the blamed engine seems to be suffering from an acute attack of indisposition."

The doryman looked at Tom and took in the boat at the same time, gave the fly wheel a yank, looked at the valves, then began to unscrew the carburetor.

"Hell!" he exclaimed, as he saw its emptiness. "Do yer damn fools expect to keep agoin' without nary a drop of ile in her?"

"What's that?" interrupted the Professor. "I assure you that the tank is two-thirds full. I never

allow a boat to leave the dock until I am sure that the tank contains a sufficient volume of gasoline."

"That beats me," replied the fisherman. "You city folks hain't got enough sense to get 'round on land, much less water. What in thunder's the use of ile in the tank if yer don't open the forward cock?" and he reached down and turned a little valve close to the tank.

"But what made us start in the first place?" asked Arch. "If, as you say, gasoline is primarily necessary to furnish the base of the energy which is essential to propel her, and that agent of progress was shut off, how was it possible for the professor to start her at all?"

"Jumping dogfish!" ejaculated the doryman, "where was yer brought up not to know that them carburetors hold enough ile to run her for a minute or two, then she runs dry. See?"

"Not yet," remarked Arch.

"Shut up!" said Don. "What we want is gasoline,—not any other kind of gas. Let's get a move on."

The Professor connected up again and we were on our way.

CHAPTER XIII

"BOYS," said Walt, after we were a mile or two from shore, the Professor at the engine, I at the wheel, and the rest balancing the boat, "did any of you read Morton's speech on 'Selecting Vocations for Boys'?"

"I did," replied Tom, "and he's way off, so far off that he can't get back. Morton's a bag of wind without even a valve to shut it off. He proposes to shove youngsters into a colander, stir them up, and let them run through a lot of keyed holes, like the magazine chutes in the linotype, each slotted to correspond with a specified vocation. It can't be done."

"Why not?" interposed Arch. "I see no reason why the laboratory should not produce a scientifically constructed separator, which would skillfully differentiate, if the several appertures, which you designate as holes, had their discharging points slotted with the result of careful research."

"Rot!" exclaimed Tom. "You can't make an automatic hopper which will discriminate or separate mechanically the grades or kinds of intelligences."

"Why not?" questioned Arch.

"Arch," retorted Tom, and there was a suspicion of pity in his voice, "you can't handle brains, *brains*, I said,—something you never had enough of to make you head ache,—as you would a lot of pig iron. Brains, Arch," he continued, "may not come into your psychology, but some folks have 'em, and when you come to take a boy, or anybody else, and undertake to tell him that his unseen and unknown brain is good for this particular this or that particular that, you're attempting to do the impossible, the utterly impossible."

"Be quiet, Tom," said Arch deliberately. "You are making a statement offhand that you cannot substantiate. Scientists do not admit the existence of what you call the impossible. In my laboratory I have, from deduction, reached results which would startle you. Practically everything, even the fundamental and basic source of every impulse, can be analyzed and measured with a degree of nicety which forestalls the liability of more than infinitesimal error."

"You'd have a tough time trying to measure yours," retorted Tom.

"Hold your tongue!" exclaimed Arch. "Don't be flippant!"

"Then stow your idiocy!" snapped Tom.

But Arch continued: "Many of the so-called mysteries of life yield easily to applied psychology.

They become but a part of a hard-to-not-understand whole. The very speed of thought, many times more rapid than that of the lightning flash, can be recorded with absolute accuracy."

"What are you getting at?" queried Tom.

"At you, principally," replied Arch. "By the way,"—seeing that Tom was about to re-explode,—"we all are governed by immutable laws, which, while they may not remove what you laymen call the free agency of man, were present at the formation of our intelligence, or rather at the time of our realization of it. They, as well as we, are responsible for the innate and inner impulses, which, working co-ordinately, give to each one of us certain somewhat exclusive, though apparently common, characteristic tendencies and personalities, and they, in the very nature of their inherent qualities, cannot avoid unmistakably determining what peculiar environment we would most readily respond to, or,—to put it so that an ignoramus like you can get up to it,—each of us has in him a series of distinct impulses, which react for him alone, though they may be possessed in general by others, and which furnish a culture upon which feed and develop those unnamable somethings which are at least coresponsible for that which, and I am speaking unscientifically, determines the measure or volume of the attributes, which, although of a com-

mon genesis, manifest themselves in a sort of exclusiveness of personality, which makes it not difficult for men of ordinary caliber to distinguish one individual from another. Do you follow me?"

"'Do I follow you?'" repeated Tom. "Some day I will, and you'll stay where I put you. Of all the book-crammed dummies that ever got out alive from academic asylums, you are the most irresponsible, the wildest specimen of hypodermically injected learning permitted to travel without a keeper! But go on. The sooner you get it out of your system, the quicker you'll be better."

Arch did not deign to answer, but continued:

"Now that you have admitted the truth of what I have presented——"

"But I haven't!" burst in Tom.

"Immaterial," interpolated Arch, and proceeded: "With the data scientifically brought within the scope of our understanding, we have only to tabulate it, and there you are."

"Where?" asked Tom irrelevantly.

"Why, you are in a position to frame certain reliable rules, which the investigator can apply to the average boy, and determine, with no small degree of accuracy, what he is good for, and what he is not likely to be a success at."

"Say, Arch," replied Tom, "your logic is no better than a porous plaster, which, slapped on

one man's stomach for cramps, may cure the rheumatism in the opposite side of another fellow."

Just then the keel touched bottom. Tom, too large and too stiff to get out of his own way, pitched five feet in advance of himself, the rest on top of him, and the discussion ended abruptly.

We hadn't hit hard, and the sand was soft. By shifting Tom and Walt, we were able to slide into deep water.

"Bless that bar! It barred Arch out," I remarked, and I laughed.

"What's the joke, Joe?" asked Walt.

"Didn't you see it?" I asked.

"See what?"

"The point,—the pun on the word 'bar.'"

"Joe," interrupted Don, "you're evidently laboring under a delusion. You didn't perpetrate any joke, nor sling a pun. The discussion we were having was not barred out, so far as I know."

"Jumping jimmies!" I exclaimed. "Haven't you fellows any sense of humor?"

"Yes,—for humor," said Tom pleasantly.

"Don't you see we hit a sand bar. When we hit the bar, the bar barred the progress of our boat and barred the subject Arch and Tom were quarreling about. Now do you see?"

"See what?" inquired Arch.

"The point," I replied.

"Was there a point to the sand bar?" asked the Professor.

"You idiots," I yelled, "you couldn't see a point even if it were sticking into you!"

"Hold!" exclaimed Don. "Joe may have a real joke up his sleeve. Perhaps he didn't properly present it. Give him a chance."

"I won't say another word," I snapped, "and the next time I frame up a joke, a first-class, original one, like that I have just sprung, I'll work it off on the mummies, before I'll sling it at such a bunch of ninnies as you are!"

"Good boy!" replied Walt. "Do it. The mummies will recognize it. They were there when it was born."

I subsided. What's the use? I don't propose to sow my seed on a desert so barren that the wind that blows over it would kill the crops of a western valley daily irrigated by the rivers of fertilization.

The Professor stuck to his engine, I stood by the wheel, the others rested at their pipes, as we glided over the slightly rolling water, meeting here and there a yachting party of summerers, men decked out in duck, and women in skirts so long in the perpendicular and so narrow in the circumference that they would drown without a kick if the boat tipped over.

I am going to put a hobble skirt on Tom, and watch him struggle to kick in it.

A pogy steamer rocked us in her wake, and every little while a fisherman crossed our bows in one of those dingy power dories, which are not afraid of the elements, go everywhere, and get back, in weather which would frighten the gold-bespangled gentleman who plays bridge below, while his underpaid pilots pace the bridge above.

Our engine stopped every time the Professor tinkered with it, but when he let it alone, it raced along in the freedom of its independence.

CHAPTER XIV

WE returned to the hotel in time for the regular boarders' dinner, which is served an hour in advance of the landing of the excursionists, who arrive at one o'clock, leave at two-thirty, and eat what they can between. They are rushers, for they must go up the monument, and down to the beach, take a two-mile ride, and dine, all in an hour and a half, less the twenty minutes reserved for walking the long wharf which connects the town with the steamer.

Our landlord was the only individual of his kind and sort in the whole clan of hotel keepers,—a modest man, who looked more like a school master than a roper-in of roomers and feeders. He ran his hotel way ahead of what he charged you, and nobody kicked at bed or board, except the ever-present fault-finder, who, because he is used to little at home, expects much when away.

The hotel was located but a short distance from where the wharf connected with the land, the front abutting the street, and the rear reaching out over the water. As the excursionists had but two ways to go after leaving the pier, half of them came our way.

Our landlord stood in the middle of the road, and, in an apologetic voice, gave out the impression that seventy-five cents deposited with him would return to the depositor its face value in the kind of food that's filling. But somehow he didn't do it as though he himself dined at his own hostelry. There wasn't any pull or push to his remarks. Consequently most of the people walked by him, to line up at a restaurant, where you could get all you wanted of what there was for four dimes and a nickel, with two picture post-cards as premiums.

Don seemed much interested in watching the operation. He didn't sell stocks the way the landlord sold dinners. At last he stepped to his side, and whispered, "Let me bark for you. I'll fetch 'em in."

The landlord was willing, really rejoiced.

Don took a position where nobody could help seeing him, struck an attitude, and began.

"The one and only place where you can't eat all they give you," he yelled.

"Come off!" shouted Walt, "you're driving folks away. Let me get onto the job."

Walt swept Don aside, swung his whiplike arms, and, keying his voice up to the seventh C, cried: "Here's where you get real food, more than a kegful to every customer; fresh fish with the hook still sticking into him; clams that were basking in the

sun half an hour ago; a whole pie to each and every eater; a bowlful of ice cream with icicles for whiskers! Get in line there! Tumble up, ladies, and the fellows who're putting up the dough! Just a few seats left! Who's next?"

The crowd stampeded for the house, and a hundred and fifty were turned away.

There were twenty-five-cents-per-head fishing and sailing yachts, which twice a day went out into the bay loaded with an assortment of men and women of every age and condition, some of them amateur sailors, who squeal and squeak when a ripple strikes the bowsprit and the boat heels a quarter of an inch. Their captains were clothed in sea-salted hides as thick as the sweaters folks wear when it's hot. They knew the water roads so well that they could scent their way in a fog as thick as the density of a Ph. D.-getting thesis on "The Simplicity of Spoken Speech." They steered by instinct, and tacked by intuition. They had a name for every bar and rock, every point and channel. Pitch them overboard in the blackness of an inky night, and they would swim their way to the nearest foothold. If their boat turned over, they would straddle the keel, rig a sail out of the slack of their trousers, and steer with the flat of their soles.

Captain Salter was the dean of them all. He was seventy or more, as burned as the ribs of the dingey

he towed, and had a roll to his walk that would put a northeaster wave to shame.

We were members of one of his fishing parties. Unassisted he manned the wheel and sail, and between tacks he let out a flow of anecdote, which, if taken at its flood, would have washed a hole in the strongest breakwater.

His mind was stored with stories, and he told them as though each delivery was as fresh as his counter-jumping passengers, who, clothed in the starched linen of their extravagance, wobbled about the cock-pit in vain endeavors to keep their equilibrium, when real sailors of the deep knew enough to sit down.

The passenger list was made up of the usual amount of city folks, who wouldn't know a boat from an automobile, if both were wintering in a garage; and who can't tell a compass from a cyclometer. They baited their hooks in the interest of the fish, and held the slender lines with grips strong enough to keep a towline taut.

There were twenty of them aboard, half and half, old and young, all dressed for dinner, women in stays, and men with high collars and creased pantaloons.

They looked more like a stranded theater party, than care-free summerers.

After a while we reached a spot where a lonesome

fish occasionally rose to the surface and dared you to catch him. The captain heaved the anchor, to the music of some sympathetic heaving by those responsive souls who never fail to give up what is in them when there's a call for contributions.

But it was rough. We rose and fell at the rise and fall of the rolling billows, which have no respect for those who dare to ride them. The sun poured its red-hot rays upon us, the boat rocked like a cradle on a pivot to the lullabies of a vernacular which unassisted tongue could never utter.

On bended knee, and in various indescribable positions, we besought the captain to take us ashore, to land us on the parched sands of Short Point, to carry us to any place where the sky was steady and the earth was at rest.

Poor Don! He was a sight that would start the tears out of the closed, chiseled eyes of a marble statue in cold storage. Upon the floor of the cockpit he didn't move in harmony with the motion of the boat, for he had a roll his exclusive own. Now and then he tried to pull himself together, only to fall prostrate upon the hard floor. As a sailor he was a failure, but as a contortionist he would have outgeneraled the squirming human eel of the greatest show on earth.

Arch alone sat in the majestic dignity of his well-balanced interior, which ignored the roll and the

rock. Until he could formulate a psychological reason for internal disturbance, he would not, he could not, respond to any influence which didn't appear in the lexicon of his science. For once psychology found a place which even Tom couldn't criticise.

But why not change the slide and let another picture cover the sheet of my story?

We were out fishing. What about the fish? If the sea had been solid with fish, so closely packed together that they covered the surface of the water with a carpet as firm as macadam, I wouldn't have dropped a naked hook into their open jaws; but rather I would have run along upon their backs until I reached a place with no rollicking, playful, mirthful water under it.

Fish? Hereafter I'll cast my line from off a stone-arched bridge, and close my eyes at the tiniest ripple of the well-behaved water.

I don't report any of the discussions held on board, for several good and sufficient reasons, among which I will mention the compulsory absence of any contention which may be expressed in printable words. Each of us was busy attending to matters which couldn't be postponed, and while none of us would have refused to share his inner feelings with the rest, there was an absence of that fraternity, which, although it did not affect our spontaneity,

was not conducive to any appearance of other than material outpourings.

It's a pretty rough sea, however, that doesn't wash up good to somebody. There was at least one compensating incident. The crease was soaked out of Don's white trousers, and as he stood upon the wharf, with his tailor-made suit of white flannel clinging to him, my heart filled with thanksgiving to Neptune, who had, for a time, reduced the dude population to one less than would have descrated the earth, if Don had remained ashore.

CHAPTER XV

RIGHT here originally appeared the best (even if it were original) salt sea snapper of a joke that ever grew out of Cape Cod sand. It came to me while I was opening an envelope containing an unexpected check, which drove my good nature to the surface, and made me feel on the best of terms with even the acquaintances I despise.

I grabbed my pen and wrote it out. It was too good to be tampered with or revised. Without adornment I wrote it into this page, and even I, its author, laughed at it.

It went to the publisher, and escaped the eye of the automatic, cog-wheel-working proof-reader, who mechanically works without thinking, hunting for errors as the dumb magnet draws the bits of helpless steel unto itself.

But my friend, the editor, having nothing important to do, read every other page of the proof. He had informed me, incidentally, in his sweet, quiet way that the omission of the intervening pages did not detract from the quality of the book.

As luck would have it, his roving eye struck this joke. He telephoned me.

"Say, old man," he said, "I have just read page ——"

"Great, isn't it?" I exclaimed, and even the telephone receiver blushed at my enthusiasm. "That's my banner joke. I can hear it strike twelve. What a wonderful control you have over yourself, my dear boy, in subduing your peals of hilarity! Do you know, I laughed at it myself, and every time I think of it, a breakfast-food smile smashes the calm of my placidity."

"Your what?"

"My p l a c i d i t y."

"Joe," he replied, and the wire aided and abetted the metallic severity of his words, "Joe, I deeply regret to be obliged officially to inform you that page —— must be omitted."

"Why?" I yelled.

I could feel the bracing up of Frank, the editor. There was a pause. He was concentrating all of his reserve strength into his mouth.

"Joe,"—the wire groaned and snapped,—"Joe," he repeated, "is it possible that you, or any other man of miscroscopic sense, with even the minutest molecule of atomized discrimination, could have considered for the one-millionth part of a split second that what you wrote during a moment of temporary insanity possesses the reflected semblance of the faintest shadow of even inexcusable humor?"

"Frank!"

"Shut up. This is my call. Wait, Joe," he continued in that gray, dismal, distant tone, "Joe——"

The strain was more than mortal tongue could stand.

"Frank!" I shouted, "Frank! For the love of the seven original gods of humor, come off, come down! You can't fool me with your acting. The joke hit you so hard that you can't see straight. I can hardly keep the lines of my face intact, or wiggle my tongue at regulation time, when I think of that alliteration, so wonderful, so grand, so superb, penetrating the density of modern humor in one fell swoop of excruciating wit. 'Salt sea sauce' and 'bounding billows billing!' Howl, you numbskull, howl!"

"I am," broke in Frank, "and the dog is accompanying me."

I paused. What did he mean?

"Frank," I called, "don't you think that joke had better be printed in larger type, so that the reviewers won't miss it?"

"If we set it in circus-poster type as big as the blanket on the elephant," replied Frank, "and the whole world wore spy glasses, nobody would see the point."

Then a ripple of intelligence began to trickle down my mental vertebræ. He was in earnest! The

sharp joke end of my humor had not even pricked through the sole-leather covering of his cast-iron ribs.

"Frank!"

No answer.

"Frank! Frank!"

"Well?"

"Frank," I said, and I was measuring my words, "are you serious? Is the upper strata of your conceivability too thick to be penetrated by anything that isn't injected into it? Explain, if you have sufficient grasp upon our common vernacular to express yourself with as much as cloudy clearness."

"Don't hump yourself," came over the wire. "I didn't say I wouldn't use the stuff. I merely informed you that I wouldn't print it."

"Whatcher going to do with it?" I asked, with a calmness born of amazement.

"Joe," he replied, and he knew that I knew that he was too far away for me to hit him, "I'm going to hang that page in my yard on washdays."

I fell into the hole.

"What for?" I asked, fool that I was.

"So that the clothes may dry even when it rains."

Simultaneously we dropped the instruments. I opened the window that what I said might not damage the furniture.

That joke, my best joke, the finest piece of super-

refined humor ever built by man, is working—but not in this book. It is the pride of Rainy Monday. It would do a blind man good to see the smile of the wet wash as it casts its dampness upon it and waves its appreciation.

What is a joke? I have searched the dictionaries, and waylaid the encyclopedias. I have read the pictures in "Life," "Puck," and "Judge." I have slept with the "Old Farmer's Almanack" under my pillow. But the answer cometh not.

The reader laughs at what he thinks is funny, and asks no questions. By and by, perhaps, somebody, not here, but elsewhere, may, in his laboratory, analyze a joke, if he can find one, and write out the formula of it.

CHAPTER XVI

WE were back in Boston again, at the Round Table, eating cold rice and drinking iced tea.

Why did I abruptly close up Promiston, and neglect to describe the incidents that marked our homeward trip?

That's my business. When my mind grows weary, and my pen needs a rest, I shall announce an intermission, retire to my dressing-room, smoke up, and wait for my shifting brain to set another scene.

CHAPTER XVII

IT was hot! The bacteria of Boston's culture were too heated to spread the germs of intellectuality, which are epidemic and riotous during the days of the Symphony, and when the New Art Museum is free to the public.

The oil on the Fenway roads looked like blisters on an auto shoe. The blue ink on the editorial pages of the "Sanskrit" was losing color, and becoming pale enough to mingle its exclusiveness with the abutting columns of sterlized news and pasteurized comment.

The Back Bay wind was sleeping, and the sidewalks of stone and brick seemed just out of superheated ovens, and radiated a warmth known to Boston only when Nature is free to do as she pleases.

It was so hot that the members of the Chaucer Club, in meeting assembled, sat in their shirt-sleeves, while eye-glassed waiters sprinkled the sizzling tables with the melting metaphors of chilled refinement.

"Let's get out of here," moaned Arch, "and be quick about it."

"Where?" asked the Professor.

"Anywhere," murmured Walt, for it was too hot to exercise his full voice.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," interjected Don. "We'll take the Banfield boat. Maybe it's cool somewhere. We'll go to Banfield, then to the lake region, camp out, fish the lakes, and bask in the shade of the primeval forests, and——"

"You can't 'bask in the shade,' " drawled Arch, and he would have said more, had not the streams of perspiration filled his mouth.

Don didn't even look at him.

"Yes, boys," he continued, "we'll take a grip apiece, no trunks, and have the delightfulest of don't-care-a-continental times."

"Shut up," whispered Tom, "it makes me perspire to listen."

"We'll meet at the wharf at a quarter to five," said Don. "I'll see to the tickets and staterooms."

We were there, all but Arch. He missed the boat by a quarter of an inch.

"Take the train," yelled Tom, as the boat swung clear of the dock.

Did you ever go Down East in a Down-East steamer? Better do it. She's a great big craft, with a dozen decks, more or less, a feeding place in the stern, and many tiers of box spaces, called by courtesy "staterooms."

If as much of the boat were under water as looms

up above it, the keel would bump along the bottom of the ocean, like a Mississippi steamboat running over sand bars.

We sailed along steadily until we passed the lower light, and then the water ran into the smokestack, the waves soused the windows, the decks were under water, and everything and everybody rolled, rolled, rolled.

Twice we turned a complete somersault, but her propellers didn't stop. They were as used to beating fog as to churning water.

It was so wet and sticky that I didn't lash myself to the fence which encircled the decks. Securely I stuck to what I sat on.

"Captain," I remarked, as that officer, shod in pneumatic boots, which enabled him to walk on deck as a fly parades the ceiling, happened to pass near me, "is it always as rough as this?"

"Rough!" he exclaimed. "Rough! This rough? Say, you ought to have been with us last week. We were under water most of the time, and when we docked, the ship was bottomside up."

"How did you manage?" I inquired meekly, as I fell into the trap he had opened for me.

"Easily," replied the Captain. "We put rollers on the top of the smokestacks and masts, and skated over the bottom."

Some day I'll meet that officer on solid land.

Then I'll wallop him until he can't tell whether he's walking on mud or treading on air. There are times when language is as insufficient to handle a proposition as is a human stomach to digest the leather and bullets fired into it from out the magazine of a buffet-car pantry.

It was so thick that I couldn't distinguish myself from the other passengers. Having nothing to do, I passed the time by cutting the fog into blocks, and playing dominoes with them.

In the morning we were in the river, at least so one of those gilt-girdled semi-sphinxes condescended to inform me. I had asked him four times to explain the absence of the motion which all night had systematically dropped me from berth to floor and jerked me back again.

I had read about the grandeur and verdure of the stately hills, those forest-topped sentinels, which guard the shores of the river. But I didn't see them.

To never be disappointed, I recommended the continuous accompaniment of a bundle of that wonderfully constructed railroad and steamboat literature, which, with the connivance of the docile camera, pictures only icicled nooks in summer, and limits its descriptions to the lore that lures the languid tourist from the cool of his home veranda, and his ever-present bathroom, into Saharas of sun-smacked

sand, and to the lands where the trees absorb the heat of the breezes and blow it at you in torrid humidity.

By following the biased maps, and far more deceiving descriptions, I was able to realize that I was sailing between solid phalanxes of commercially selected scenery, plentifully intermixed with some history and much legend. On either side of me, so said the guide book, were untold millions of prehistoric Lover's Leaps, open-air theaters, upon whose rocky and grassy stages the Indians played their war dramas, while the early settlers cast the first dice of graft.

Every now and then I hailed a blue-coated officer, and asked him the questions he had fought against for years. A grunted reply, usually indistinguishable, occasionally gave me the information that we were passing a spot of historic interest. I traced it upon the map, read what a writer who had never been there had intimately described, and enjoyed the scenery I didn't see.

When I get back, I shall join a correspondence school of imagination. I recall a graduate of this absent-treatment institution of learning, which forwards its canned curriculums by mail. Her brain was ninety-nine per cent. imagination. She stayed at home, and took her vacation alongside the guide book. Without effort, and without expense, she

toured the world on paper. Seated in her shady bower, she sailed her imagination upon paper seas, traveled the continents upon paper trains, and climbed paper monuments upon paper stairs.

How happy and serene she looked, taking her costless vacation! No fares to pay, no waits, no annoyances! Her ships met with no delays. Her trains were on time. No rain spoiled her hat or soaked her shoes. The baking sun of the tropics scorched her not. The ocean's roll didn't affect her appetite, and there was no food so mysterious as to disturb her digestion.

After a camel ride over the burning Egyptian sands, she would lay aside her book, and rest in the coolness of an electric fan, while the foolish folks, who leave their homes, swelter in the still air of a foreign atmosphere.

With all the comforts of home surrounding her, the whole world was at her elbow.

We bumped against something. I jumped at the recoil of the boat. The deck hand near me grinned.

"What did we hit?" I asked.

"Don't know, but reckon it's Banfield."

"Often strike it that hard?" I queried.

"Generally worse," was all he said.

We got out. If there was any Banfield in sight, we didn't see it. The naked eye could discern nothing save a few looming-up shadows, which may

have been the outriggers of Banfield's marine importance.

From out the fog came screams of rivalry, bespeaking the attractions of the competing hostelries, which guaranteed to give you a bed with board for a fee consistent with the advanced cost of the viands they didn't serve.

"All aboard for the Banfield House!" yelled a voice whose owner we couldn't see. "Only hotel in the city with a piazza overlooking the water."

For foggy reasons that didn't appeal to us.

"Free 'bus to Hotel Holder," shouted an individual who later loomed up in the mist as he grabbed Tom's bag. "Finest table east of New York."

He said this without a blush—and we from Boston!

"Anything on it?" asked Tom, with that childlike placidity which would have wrung a contribution out of a trust philanthropist.

The runner looked at him, but as he hadn't memorized a suitable reply, he said nothing.

We got into the 'bus, and there, on the front seat, were the outlines of a somebody who we afterwards discovered was Arch. His train, although several hours late,—if it had been on time the conductor would have lost his job,—had arrived just before our boat struck the dock, and Arch, working under an unnatural flash of intelligence, had actually

navigated the space between the hotel and the wharf.

"This rather reminds me of your last speech," remarked Walt, after we were assured of Arch's identity.

"Thanks," replied Arch quietly, "I always thought they were dry."

Nobody laughed, although the joke, or pun, or whatever else it may have been, was several leagues ahead of Arch's usual display of alleged humor.

"Where's the town?" asked the Professor of the driver.

"Right here," was the reply, and then there was silence, the kind that you can't dissipate with knife, fork, or gun; quiet so still that you could hear it resting.

Shaking the fog from off our clothing, we entered the hotel.

"All alone?" asked the greased and ironed czar, who filled the office with his sublime importance, of each of us, after we had separately and collectively told him that we wanted six communicating rooms with three baths.

"You mean with a door between 'em," he remarked, after the full significance of our request had soaked into his hair-grown skull.

"That's the idea," said Arch, coming to the rescue. "We desire to occupy six regular spaces, each, with the exception of the outer two, abutting

on either side with others of their kind, with openings, commonly known as doors, in their partitions, which otherwise would be impervious to intercommunication. And, further, we request that between these selected spaces there be walled off smaller ones, which, in most parts of our country, are designated in the common vernacular as bathrooms."

The hotel keeper gasped.

"We hain't got 'em," was all he said.

"Let me handle this affair," said Don, as he waved us aside.

After a series of vocal marches and countermarches, Don got close enough to the clerk to procure three sets of rooms with half a bathroom per room, and, notwithstanding that it was midafternoon, we unanimously went to bed.

(There's something wrong with that last expression, but let it stand. For the first time there was complete unanimity, one solitary thought that consumed us. We were tired. A bumpful night aboard a virtual carousal on the deep demanded sleep, and plenty of it.)

We met at the dinner table, ourselves again, save Arch, whose troubled brain refused to permit him to close his eyes or to close up his mind. Upon his felt-painted mattress of straw he had stretched himself, while his stubborn intellect hunted in vain for the reason why he didn't involuntarily go to sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

WE were now on our way to that expensive body of cold, deep, fresh water named in honor of the last surviving quadruped, who, in his lonesomeness, overdrank at its shores, and died in the absence of his kind.

Before entering the now-tracked wilderness, we stopped for two days at one of those huge conglomerations of stone, lumber, rocks, and plaster, which rise out of the devastated forest, and is advertised to ooze with the perfume of the balsam, which was sprinkled upon its timbers with the aid of a huge atomizer charged with the manufactured odor of the smells of all out-doors.

In the pictures of those architectural monstrosities, we had seen men sitting in the calm, cool comfort of deshabille, while diamondless women frollicked upon the mossy slopes separating the two-mile piazza and the smiling water, which never of its own accord scowled at anybody.

If, however, there were any of these care-free, sensible, and comfortably dressed individuals thereabouts, they must have been in their rooms, for all in evidence were decked out in the costumes which

are prescribed upon the commandment slabs of fashion, before which society is never brave enough to raise a whisper of dissension.

Sometime somebody somewhere (kindly note the alliterative sibillation) will gather about him a sufficient number of men and women of sense to nip the summer bloom of style in its bud, and then folks will not be mere forms upon which to hang the vagaries of a fashion born of mental weakness and fostered by commercialism.

Only two of the men guests, so far as we could see, were dressed to meet the weather, and none of the women wore clothes which a self-respecting dog could have been forced into unless you muzzled him. On every hand glittered the gilt of gold plate and the stones of extravagance.

The hotel was so big that elevating railroads carried you from floor to floor, and trolleys ran at minute headway, through corridors so long that you had to look twice to see the end of them.

The lower floor was one immense hall. In the middle of it, and from out of it, radiated innumerable apartments, each decorated in recognition of the renaissance of some mildewed art, which even the insanest wild man wouldn't have dared to assemble unsupported by what fools call style.

We were trying to seat ourselves upon half a dozen chairs, which were built in a vain attempt to

restore to modern use the hard-tack furniture of a vintage which soured prehistoric ages ago.

Around us sat a hundred or less specimens of what are profanely called "summer girls,"—pollened blossoms on society's stalks, which would mate with their kind, and populate the earth with a grade of two-legged animals, spavined and deformed, too lean and lank for canning. Their wagging tongues beat the odoriferous air in disharmony to the leader's baton, as he forced his perspiring orchestra to grind out notes which wouldn't be negotiable in any bank or bucket shop of discord.

For room and board, this handful of string sawers and horn tooters filed or blew out holes in the scores of the great masters, while meaningless and petty gossip saturated the air, and golden thimbles pushed the needles into fabrics foreordained to blush as they spread themselves upon the powdered shoulders of peek-a-boo nudity.

After we had sat awhile, trying to separate a few of the musical strains from out the gossipy chorus, which rose and fell as disconnected tongues beat their everlasting tattoo upon the stifling air, we adjourned to one of the tiers of piazzas, which in parallel lines encircled the hotel. Here the men congregated, some of them owners, but most of them drivers, of autos and chattel mortgages,—a mixed crowd of ambitious individuals, each vying with his neighbor in

a perpetual struggle to receive recognition for those things which only money can give and which have no market except among financial climbers.

Here were bankers and bankers' clerks, soap makers and their customers, with a plentiful sprinkling of would-bes and soon-to-be-has-beens, a competing assortment of all the kinds that make up that unanalyzable conglomeration which the world calls society, with here and there an educated ass, who wags his tail at pretension and brays at the torturing toot of the horn of money.

Next to us sat two of those self-inflated specimens of that growing clan of men who are full of cash to-day and empty to-morrow. We couldn't help hearing all that they said, because, while apparently talking to each other, they were casting their words out into the wide, wide world. Money fairly rolled from their mouths. They talked high finance, and each in his turn went his neighbor one better in presenting his claim for financial immensity.

Don thought he recognized one of them.

"Is this Mr. Walton?" he inquired politely.

The addressed barely turned his head when he answered with a snappy "Yes."

"I think I met you at the Knockers' Club," said Don.

"Maybe," returned the gentleman, hardly look-

ing at Don. "I think that I was there once, for a day never passes unaccompanied by a dozen invitations to attend as guest our leading business and social functions, and there are times when I find it advisable to be somewhat democratic, and to be present at meetings which are not attended by those of my class."

We said nothing.

"Queer sort of a crowd, those Knockers," he continued. "Saw nobody there that was much of anybody. Awful bore."

"Guess you're right," replied Don seriously. "Most of the fellows who go there are certainly not of your kind. Money isn't the long suit with the Knockers."

"I should say not," the gentleman condescended to reply. "Common sort of folks, poor professors and unknown authors. One wastes his time to talk with 'em."

"But I'm one of 'em," said Don smilingly.

The gentleman turned to Don, scrutinized him closely, and remarked, "Well, I suppose there are a few gentlemen among them."

"Yes, a few," replied Don, with quiet dignity. "But, by the way, my friend, are you not connected with the cotton industry?"

"I would hardly say 'connected,'" he replied. "I sometimes feel that I *am* the industry." And he

said it without the semblance of a smile upon his face.

Don was plainly irritated.

"You are Mr. Walton?"

"Yes," he replied, with a voice full of pride, while the same passion illuminated his red and mottled face. "I am Charles B. Walton, the president and majority stock-holder in the great Walton Cotton Company, which, of course, you have heard of."

"Yes," drawled Don, with unmistakable indifference. "I know your house pretty well."

"What's your business?"

"Well," replied Don slowly, "it's pretty hard to say just what it is. I've sold goods, and was a book-keeper for a spell. Lately I've worked in one of the banks, but don't like my job, and maybe I'll make a change, if I get a chance."

"Then, of course, you know my bank, the Metropolitan?" said the gentleman pompously.

"Your bank?" interrogated Don simply.

"Well," replied the gentleman with a flourish, "not exactly my bank, but I suppose I could call it that, if I had a mind to. Our house is its biggest depositor, and the bank knuckles down to us. I could be president of it, if I said the word."

"The Metropolitan Bank?" inquired Don gently.

"The same."

"I dislike to contradict a gentleman," said Don

politely, "but I fear that you are laboring under a slight delusion. Your house is not the heaviest depositor by a thundering big majority."

The gentleman rose to his feet, casting an angry eye upon Don, which didn't seem to damage him, and shouted, "I don't know who you are, sir, and I care less, but you're a liar, sir, a liar, and I demand an apology."

"What! For telling the truth?" questioned Don, without any indication that he felt the fear the speaker believed he had generated in him.

"How dare you dispute me, sir?" retorted Mr. Walton. "Do you, a mere employee of some insignificant banking house, assume to take exception to my statements? Who are you, pray?"

"Nobody in particular," drawled Don. "Not much of anybody. Only a mere employee, as you put it. Just the unfortunate president of the Metropolitan Bank, and one of the starving owners of the building you are in. But," and Don raised his voice, "you won't be there long, unless you pony up with your rent."

If ever a man was astonished, amazed, frustrated, and flabbergasted, it was President Walton of the great Walton Cotton Company. He sank into his chair, remained there for a while, then tried to speak.

"Don't say it," said Don gently, "let it go by

default. But hark you, my friend, to a little advice, which I'll lend you without discount. When you want to brag, and to draw the long bow to its breaking point, tackle fellows you know don't know how you're fixed. Good-morning."

CHAPTER XIX

"COME, boys," said Don, "let's go down to the tennis grounds. I used to play a pretty good sort of a game years ago, and maybe I haven't forgotten how to hit a ball."

The tennis court was located back of the hotel, and already was well filled with men and women, dressed, not for the game, but for the lookers on, and who used a racket as a dude carries a cane, to strut round with, and the ball as an excuse for the aggravating display of silk-covered ankles.

Among the tennisers was a young man who looked older than he probably was, every other time that your eye fell upon him, clad in white below and stripes above. Taking him as a whole, he resembled one of those fill-in members of an outdoor chorus, in a play where inappropriately dressed supernumeraries seem necessary to throw the leading lady into the lime light. A fraternity button plugged a buttonhole, and upon his fob swung the insignia of another of the numerous fraternities which spread fraternity by refusing to fraternize with the fellows whose Alma Mater is the great world of accomplishment.

He had the grace of a master of ceremonies at a second-class beach house, and seemed to move in an atmosphere distinctively of his own generating. His self-esteem enveloped him in a shroud impervious to the dust of common earth. He was a puppet of politeness, one of those deliciously dear, sweet, perfumed gentlemen, who would rather starve to death in evening dress than eat off of a bare board or drink out of a tin dipper.

His words, each selected and society-ized, slipped gently between his carmined lips, and fell upon his hearers like soap bubbles, which bounce and play gleefully before they evaporate into nothing. He was so nice, so very nice, so overnice, so infernally nice, that when a real man looked at him, he, the man, felt an irresistible and uncontrollable desire to take him by the nape of his rose-colored neck, lift him aloft, and squeeze him till he sputtered.

He danced lightly upon the ground, for he was abnormally light upon his feet. All eyes were upon him, and his eyes wandered from ball to lookers on. He seldom missed either ball or audience, for he was a really good player at this fashionable game, which is engaged in more often by those who don't care for it, than by those who love it for the healthful exercise it gives. Whoever he was, he was a masterful success of his kind,—one of those refined and polished gentlemen, who are gentlemen always and some-

times something better, the kind some kinds of women run after, adulate, and adore. But to nobody else does this counterfeit of manliness appeal in any other way than in the creation of a terrible thirst for the real thing.

"Who is he?" I asked of a slender slip of a girl who stood near me. Evidently she didn't resent my intrusion.

"He," she replied, with admiration fairly bubbling from her lips, "is Professor Sweet."

"What's he professor of?" I inquired.

"Didn't you ever hear of Professor Sweet?" exclaimed the girl in wonderment.

"No."

"How funny!" she lisped. "He's head of the department of physics at Cadlift, and isn't he sweet? All the girls just love him, he's such a gentleman. And he's so learned! Why, at Hale," she continued, "he was valedictorian, and my Cousin Jennie, who lives there, says that when he was through speaking more than seventy-five bouquets were thrown at him. After he graduated from Hale, he went to Hopper and took his Ph.D., and—but isn't he too nice for anything?"

"Well," I said, not wishing to displease her, "he is certainly different from any other professor I have seen."

My informant, however, had not finished with him.

"He has written a book," she rattled on, after her breath had caught up with her. "It's on the 'Ethical Inertia of Kinetic Energy.' I just dote on it. I read a chapter of it every day. Do you know," she ran on, "he's going to write another book, which hasn't anything to do with his profession, for, you see, he's awfully talented."

"What's the subject of this marvelous literary creation?" I asked, because I felt that I ought to say something.

"I don't exactly know," she replied, "but it's about the sources of the sensations of sentiment. I just can't wait for it to be published."

"Has he done anything else?" I inquired, with apparent interest.

The girl looked at me, then feeling assured that I was in earnest, she replied, "Oh, yes, sir. You ought to see him in his laboratory, experimenting on the reactions of molecular motion. And he says, the professor does, that he's about to discover how to separate the indistinguishable into its component, or resultant, or some other kind of, parts, and he's going to prepare a monograph about them, which will make it ever so easy for us to recognize them."

"I perceive," I broke in, "that you are a college girl."

"Oh, yes," she replied, with animation. "Pa wanted me to learn stenography, so that I could

help him at the office, but Ma made him send me to college. I'm a junior," and her face expressed her pride, "and next year I'm going to go into his class. Do you know," and she blushed slightly, "I can hardly wait for college to open."

Here, indeed, in the professor, was a curiosity, a product of our academic factories, which can fill a hollow head with the essence of bottled learning, and make an educational excuse out of the thinnest brain. Here was a man too effeminate to be a woman, with enough real stuff in him to learn about the goods the colleges deal in, and to come out of an academic tread-mill professionally adapted to distribute the blossoms of the tree of science, without even having cut into the solid trunk that grew them.

Professor Sweet was a success, a dancing dandy of a success. He had dug just deep enough into educational earth to harvest recognition, and fashion's universities were competing to annex him to their faculties. He was a teacher of women,—no, I have too much respect for women to connect them with only the semblance of a man,—a teacher, rather, of that peculiar sex which neither sex wants to be responsible for. He was a modern comber of the surface of science, a painter of the upper crust of learning, which the upper crust of society is sometimes crusted with.

Professor Sweet supplied an ever-increasing de-

mand. He had the goods the people wanted; and dealers in science, and art, and education, bowed before his popularity, while commercially tainted faculties forgot their learned calling, and, like men of money, grabbed for anything that would increase the quantity of their enrollment, even if it reduced the quality of their reputations.

Many of our large institutions of learning, nowadays, are little more than commercial enterprises, with society athletes in the ring, who dance, and hop, and skip at the snapping of the whip of wealth, wielded by a master hand, sometimes called a president, who knows how to pack his dormitories.

The professor won every game he played. Walt watched him with increasing interest. At the close of the eighth round of success, he stepped up to him and remarked, "You play a fine game, Professor."

"Yes," drawled the insipid recipient of Walt's attention. "It is my favorite pastime. I hardly know what I would do without tennis. My close confinement to the laboratory makes it pre-eminently essential that I relax at times."

"I used to swing a racket myself," said Walt. "Will you try a game with me?"

"I would be delighted to," replied the professor cordially.

They started in.

The reader expects me to relate how Walt figura-

tively swept the ground with his opponent, how he walloped him at every play. But he didn't. The professor won with so much ease that most of us forgot that he had any one playing against him. I am sorry, indeed, that I can't make a different record, but my imagination, pliable as it is, couldn't stand the pressure which would have to be put upon it, if I had challenged it to conceive of Walt, with his disconnected joints and out-of-plumb body, winning anything in the way of an athletic contest.

CHAPTER XX

WE returned to the house, found a secluded nook on the upper piazza, and began our usual game of conversation, which had lagged somewhat on account of the counteracting influences which had beset us.

"Arch," said Walt, after six freshly filled pipes, like six lively chimneys, were screening us from the outer world, "have you read the article on 'The Cause and Effect of Humor,' which appeared in the current issue of the 'Optimistic Magazine'?"

"I have," replied Arch, with interest.

"What do you think of it?"

"I differ somewhat from what the writer says. He is rather superficial, and does not approach with any closeness to the source of his subject. Humor is not, as he says, a material substance, but is rather a reflex action, springing primarily from what I may unscientifically call the existence of attack. The punster and joker, often without knowing it, literally create a surprise, which is a sort of attack upon their hearers or readers."

"Hold!" interrupted Don. "You say that he springs a surprise, takes you off your hinges. Is

that what Joe does when he slings his second-hand stuff at us?"

"No," replied Arch soberly. "Joe's remarks are not jokes. They are simple, far-fetched attempts at farther-away humor. We unavoidably anticipate what he is going to say."

I kept still; and Arch looked surprised, for keeping still on my part was never comprehended by Arch in his philosophy.

"Let me continue," said Arch. "Humor is the collation of gathered incidents, sometimes true, but usually exaggerated, which, when presented at the opportune time, so attack the hearer that he can't avoid a retaliating action or reaction, which usually manifests itself in what you laymen call a smile, or may be extended into one of those unpreventable outbursts commonly known as laughter."

"That is, a joke isn't a joke if nobody laughs at it?" interrogated Tom.

"Tom," replied Arch, "you have unintentionally propounded a sensible question, and I welcome it. The reaction or proper resentment at the receipt of a joke produces a response which is discernible only when the receiver manifests the impulse given him by some sign which is commonly known as a smile or laughter. But this outward appearance of reaction may not be considered as scientific proof that the cause of it is allied with humor. I have often laughed

at your attempt at punning. Yet I am convinced that my reaction was not because of any humor contained in what you said."

Tom opened his mouth.

"We will postpone any comment, for the present," said Arch decidedly, as he looked at Tom.

Tom reloaded his corncob, and smoked in silence.

"Conversely," continued Arch, "a remark may be freighted with real humor, and yet its hearers may, for obvious reasons, refuse to react; or it is supposable that they may, for equally good reasons, suppress any outward manifestation of having recognized or received the attack."

"That accounts for it," said Tom drily.

"For what?" inquired Arch.

"For the reason that we don't respond to some of the things you say."

"You are irrelevant," growled Arch. "Can't you keep still once a year, and try to learn something? If I should begin now to fill you up, and should keep at it for six months, and you took in all I said, there would still remain an emptiness inside your skull."

"Guess you're right," replied Tom, with a twinkle in his eye, which fortunately Arch didn't see.

"Humor, then," Arch resumed, "is something seen or heard, or both, which takes you unawares."

"You bet it would," snapped Tom. "If you'd ever say anything funny, you'd take us unawares."

"Tom," burst out Arch, "can't you keep shut up for ten minutes? You needn't listen, if you don't want to; you haven't any right to interfere with the pleasures of others."

"Do you mean me?" asked Walt soberly.

"Or me?" queried the Professor.

"Or me?" interjected Don.

"Or me?" I inquired.

"No!" snapped Arch, as he folded up his mouth.

"Come, Arch," said Tom, "don't be so confoundedly sensitive. Maybe there's something to what you say, because once in a while you manage to let go a word or two, which most likely isn't yours, and so, maybe, is worth listening to. As I understand your philosophy, Arch, a joke isn't a joke, and humor isn't humor, unless it produces an attack; and if there's nobody attacked, that is, if there's nobody to attack, then the humor that might have been, isn't."

"Go on with your fool talk," interrupted Arch. "It isn't impossible for you to say something, if you keep on long enugh."

"Supper is served in two hours," I remarked.

"Hardly time enough for me to say anything," said Tom soberly. "But I just wanted to bring out this point. If, as Arch says, this particular some-

thing called humor isn't humor unless it gets at something, then I see light through a problem which has always puzzled me. An old instructor I had, when I was at a mixed school in Danbury, used to claim that there wasn't any such thing as sound, unless there was somebody to hear it when it was working. He said that thunder, in the uninhabited desert, wasn't thunder by a thundering sight, unless its aerial waves, or some other kind of waves, struck the membranes of the drums in somebody's or something's ear, and if there didn't happen to be about any eardrums with membranes, or any membranes which were up to the scratch, then the noise of the thunder didn't make any noise, and as thunder is all noise, it didn't thunder when it thundered. So if this old fellow was right, Arch hits it in the neck when he says that there isn't any humor unless there's some fool hanging round who gets hold of enough of that humor to imagine that it's humorous."

Arch collapsed. If it hadn't been for the strength of one of Tom's cigars, which he handed him, the poor fellow couldn't have walked to his room.

CHAPTER XXI

WE were on our way to the forests, which were trackless until their tracklessness was catalogued in railroad time tables, illustrated in guide books, and blazoned upon the dead walls, which the inartistic American gladly contributes to the commercial desecrator of Nature, who would sell the walls of his soul to breakfast-food bakers and soap makers, if they were big enough for the plasters of advertising to stick upon them.

We had sufficient sense to engage a guide with a license bigger than he was. He looked the part he was to play,—tall and lank, yet with a physical development and a hardiness which appear upon the paper pages of the prospectuses of our physical culture schools, that guarantee to make giants out of pigmies, and to grow athletes from stalks too withered to fill out a custom-made undershirt.

(For further description of this navigator of hill, mountain, forest, lake, and river, the reader is respectfully referred to the doctored pictures of him, and the long-distance descriptions of him, never absent from the sportive novel, or from the wonderfully and fearfully made handbooks, created out of

journalistic minds, which write fully and volumiously of things unseen by them and usually unkenned altogether.)

Each of us carried a pack instead of a traveling bag, because the latter would have been easier to lug. But were we not to be trampers of the woods, disturbers of the underbrush, and avoiders of the foot-easy paths, which paralleled the ways we had to tramp out for ourselves for the sake of sentiment.

Far be it from us to outrage sacred sediment, to depart from convention's custom, to assume the right to do as we pleased, when it pleased us to do the things which wouldn't be pleasing to any other than an idiotic summerer. The unwritten law of scheduled recreation had placed its stamp upon the pack, and we would carry these laundry-like bundles if every foot of the way was to be watered by the sweat of our foolhardiness.

I said that all of us carried packs. I forgot Arch and the Professor. They were packless. Arch wore two sets of underwear, that he might be instantaneously prepared for a ready change, and upon his back were strapped adjustable shelves, curved to fit into a sort of jacket, and filled with more than a dozen books with weighty contents.

The Professor was shingled with a coat of many pockets, each numbered to correspond with an index, which, that it might be an every-ready refer-

ence, was the sole occupant of his watch pocket, and the flap of this pocket was stamped with a double "X," that he might recognize it by eye as well as by feeling, and not have to search from No. 1 to No. 99 when he wanted to find something.

The other pockets were tagged with numerals, a third of them in red, which contained his personal effects, and the others marked in black, and filled with books, chemicals, tools of the laboratory, well-packed crucibles, and other paraphernalia, which it would be utterly impossible for him to use in the woods.

He was a portable library and laboratory on legs. Something hung from every projecting part of him. An antiseptic toothbrush rested on one ear, and a safety razor dangled as a pendant from the lobe of the other.

We left the steamer at a wood-landing situated in a tree-shaded cove. A natty little motor boat was in waiting, announced to churn through the distance separating us from the real, genuine wilderness in an hour and a half.

Did we take it? Certainly not. Would any self-respecting tramper sit on leather cushions, and allow civilized gasoline to convey him into the midst of unraked Nature? No, ten thousand times no! We were temporarily done with any thing or instrument that could, by the exercise of a superlative

imagination, be conceived to represent the slightest semblance of comfort.

Our guide procured four canoes, one for each couple of us, he to occupy the fourth with our packs, and to tow Arch's and the Professor's overloads in waterproof bags. Half of us, who had had canoe experience on the raging Charles River, because of this competency, were to become canoe captains, the other fellow to acts as crew or ballast. I took Tom in mine.

"Sit there," I commanded, "and don't you dare stir until I give you permission."

Tom squatted in the forward end, while I, in the other, which may have been the bow and may have been the stern, paddled and steered.

Once, in a moment of temporary aberration, I suggested to Tom that he assist in the propulsion.

"All right," he replied cheerily. "Give me one of your butter pats, and I'll send you flying."

I pushed a paddle toward him. He made a grab for it, and would have pitched both of us into the stream, if I hadn't kicked his outrigging foot into center.

I wish I had had a moving picture camera with me. I could have made a fortune with the film. Tom handled that paddle as he would a spoon. He dipped it into the water, edges always pointing

fore and aft, and pulled at it with all his strength when it was in the air.

After he had splashed a barrel or two of water over us, I remarked, "Let up, Tom. You're as useless as a wheel to a sleigh. I'd rather do all the work than watch your antics."

Tom didn't even smile. He dropped his paddle, stretched out lazily, closed his eyes, and entered the land where water does not flow, and where there are no shores to paddle to.

Somehow I seemed to fall behind the others. My renewed exertions didn't seem to help much. I looked for the cause and found it. I rapped Tom on the foot with my paddle. He awoke with a start.

"Take in your feet, you fool," I called out. "Do you suppose I can push this blamed craft through the water with the broadness of your soles set up against the wind?"

Tom obeyed sleepily. I paddled along, and soon was abreast of my companions. Walt had given Arch his first lesson in canoeing, and he was whacking the paddle against the water without materially retarding the speed of the canoe.

"Dip a little deeper," I heard Walt say.

"Into what?" inquired Arch innocently.

"Into the water," yelled Walt. "Do you take this for a flying machine?"

Don was in command of the Professor. With his

umbrella up, the Professor was totally oblivious of his surroundings. His eyes were riveted to the pages of one of those scientific treatises, which one has to look at seven times before he can understand the obtuse meaning of the first line upon the first page. I could see that Don's serenity was under strain. It was hard paddling at best, and the Professor's umbrella made matters worse.

Don's canoe was passing close to the shore. The trees lined the banks, and one in particular almost swept the water with its lower branches. Don dexterously gave his canoe a turn, increased its speed, and the Professor's umbrella was hanging to the branches.

The Professor didn't make a grab for it,—he didn't even miss it. He was way off, in bookland, where umbrellas do not grow.

CHAPTER XXII

ACCOMPANIED by seventeen million flies and their relatives, divided into working squads of sufficient number to give personal attention to each of us, we arrived at one of those camps which inhabit the inlets of the lake. Here, bolstered up by huge trees, was a log cabin, which may have resembled the dwelling places of my ancestors, but as my ancestors and I weren't on visiting terms, I'm not able to give you comparative data.

The cabin consisted of one room, with a floor made up of alternate inlays of aged boards and hardened earth; a table in the middle, half a dozen ready-to-descend shelves on one side, and several stretchers huddled together and covered up by boughs of evergreens, which held their greeness with a tenacity not outgeneraled by an advertised paint. A few cracked dishes, and some leaky saucepans, kettles, and dippers, decorated the walls, or hung in front of a stoned-up fire escape, called fireplace by courtesy.

We dumped our packs upon the floor, Arch and the Professor unloaded, and as true economists and devotees of modern efficiency, we took turns con-

vincing the flies and their subordinates that the less they lived upon us the longer some of them would live.

George, the guide, at once set about collecting underbrush and larger wood, and shortly had a fire roaring under a kettle of water and a tin can of coffee. He opened the packs, and from out of them he pulled the city-canned food that woodmen eat,—beans from Pittsburgh, which double-discount the Boston product, because Pittsburgh is at a sufficient distance from the Bureau of Beans to keep the flavor of counterfeit culture out of the can; condensed milk, fresh from the vacuum pans; and green peas, greened in the tin; and crackers a little wilted, but still in the ring; and butter, which ran merrily over our bread; and coffee of a strength sufficient to stop the leaks in the can it was made in.

Upon the rough table, clothless and dusted with the end of a burlap bag, he dumped, not set, enough to feed a caravan. We waited not upon the order of our beginning, but fairly swooped down upon the eatables, and swallowed them as though each bean was a piece of terrapin, and each cracker the breast of a club partridge. We forgot our manners, and sometimes our forks. Each hand fought with its neighbor, as we grabbed for everything that mouth could close upon or teeth cut asunder.

Don pushed the food into himself at lunch-counter

speed. His hands worked like the buckets of a grain elevator, and his mouth opened and shut with the rapidity of the piston of a racing motor.

"Don," said Tom, between his swallowings, "doesn't it occur to you that the rest of us have some ownership in the grub? You've got outside of a can of beans, two boxes of sardines, a loaf of bread, a pound of crackers, and a gallon of coffee. I move, boys," and he turned to the crowd, "that hereafter we weigh out what we give Don, and limit him to five pounds of solids, and a half gallon of liquid."

There were reasons why Don didn't reply. Walt was equally busy. The Professor gave science a respite, and was but a pound and a half below the average; while Arch,—but let me draw the curtain. He had arranged his food in a sort of train, and let it run into his mouth without a stop save for taking water.

We and the food fortunately gave out together. Like overfed cattle (I would use a more appropriate term if it were not for that murderer of effective English, the publisher's editor, of hair-trigger nicety, who prematurely goes off at the pressure of a forcible word), we leaned back against the wall, and slowly filled our pipes.

"See here," said the guide, and there was something in the rear of his voice that made us start, "it's time yer got to business. Do you fellows think

that I'm goin' to cook yer, feed yer, and clean up after yer? Some of yer fall to, and get the mighty little that's left off the table, and souse the plates in the tub outside. Do yer hear?"

"Boys," said the Professor, "I concur with the words spoken by our guiding friend. But I do not favor a conglomerate endeavor to obey his reasonable demands. Let us here, as elsewhere, practice the efficiency methods, so successfully worked out by Smaller and others, who have made one hand accomplish a net result which would hardly seem to be within the capacity of both hands working in unison."

"What are yer gettin' at?" interrupted Tom, while the guide stood at attention, with a look upon his face, which, with a little more provocation, would have manifested itself in more than vocal expression.

"Wait," continued the Professor. "While we are temporarily without the boundary lines of what is generally called civilization, and while we are, for the time being, not necessarily subservient to the peremptory dictates of science, and while it is not obligatory on our part to subordinate ourselves to the rules and regulations laid down by society, we should not so far remove ourselves from our former environment, or rather from the reminiscence of our quite recent past, as to proceed in a manner wholly

inconsistent with a proper respect for systematic and labor-saving action, and——"

Just then a chunk of bread, thrown with unerring aim by Walt, collided with the Professor's open mouth, and dammed the outflow.

We fell upon the dishes.

"Say, be careful," yelled the guide, "if yer break them plates, yer'll have to eat off o' boards!"

We realized the full significance of the danger. Don carefully grabbed a plate and held it in his vise-like grip, while Tom wiped it with the end of a rag. Arch grappled with the kettles and pans, and was careful not to scour through their rusty bottoms.

"Now," said the guide, "after some of yer have got in a cord or two of wood, yer can do as yer please."

Arch was beginning to show indignation.

"Shut up!" said Walt, with emphasis. "We're in for it. One guide, even if he is too cussed domineering, is worth a cageful of psychologists. He's boss, and what he says goes."

After the wood-hauling, we spread ourselves like tired dogs upon the pine-needled lawn in front of the cabin, and watched the smoke sift itself among the trees.

"Come here, Tom," shouted Arch, "and blow some of your germ-destroying tobacco into this

bunch of mosquitoes. They seem to like the stuff I'm smoking."

"Arch," replied Tom quietly, "if you'd use real tobacco, maybe the insects would know you were smoking."

Even Tom's wit was not bright enough to start a fire of conversation. We sat there, each too logy to be dissatisfied with himself, puffing away at our pipes, making no effort to interfere with each other, or to try to light up the falling shadows with the brilliancy of talk.

CHAPTER XXIII

UPON beds of evergreens, which, had we been at home, would have felt like gridirons, we slept without a dream or snore.

At six o'clock the guide pulled us out upon the floor.

"Time to get a move on," he said, "if yer want any breakfast. This 'ere boarding house don't keep table waitin'. This ain't no hotel with meals when yer get ready to eat 'em."

Half-asleep, we plunged into the water, and awoke when its iciness surrounded us.

"What do yer do that for?" growled the guide, for our morning bath delayed us a quarter of an hour.

"Why, my friend," replied Arch seriously, "we never breakfast until we have taken our morning ablutions."

"Take yer what?" exclaimed the guide. "I didn't see yer do anything 'cept flop into the water."

"George," interrupted Walt soberly, "ablution is a term vouchsafed by educated ignoramuses who delight to indulge in high-faluting expressions. Freely translated 'ablution' means a bath, a cleans-

ing of the body from the impurities which are exhaled through the cuticle, and which gather upon it from the dust-laden air."

"Yer don't say!" remarked the guide, and stood staring curiously at him, until, as Walt turned away, he nudged Don and, jerking his thumb in Arch's direction, asked, "Is that man an 'educated ignoramus'?"

"He is," replied Don.

"Well, he looks it," replied the guide sententiously. "Does it hurt him to be that way?"

'No," said Don, "his idiosyncrasies don't cause any suffering on his part. But," he added, "they are liable to be painful to those about him."

"Catchin'?"

"No, George," answered Don, "not if you don't get too close to him."

"Can't yer do nothin' for him?"

"We've tried about everything," replied Don, and nothing seems to be effective except an application of what is known as wooden massage."

"What's that?"

"A club," remarked Don, as he walked away.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE guide was the only one of us with a gun. We were vegetarian sportsmen,—not shooters of meat or drawers of blood. We would hunt with eye and camera, not waste powder and shot upon the empty air, with a chance, if accident sighted our rifles, of maiming the denizens of the forest, who, by priority of residence, had a better title to the land than we had.

We were not warriors of the woods, members of that band of braves, who, at the safe end of a rifle, wage a one-sided battle against the aborigines of the forests.

I know that I am dense, that my comprehension has a limited horizon; but somehow I cannot see what is sportsmanlike, what is heroic, what can possibly appeal to other than the lower impulses, in killing for the sake of the excitement of it, in maiming and crippling, which many times more often occur than the quick death of the creatures shot at. Neither can I see that the "for food" excuse has many rights which a decent man should respect. If the amateur would kill for food alone, and if he carried into the woods the humanity of his home,

would he not let the guide do the killing, for the guide, most likely, is a good marksman?

In my house hang no pictures of accidentally hit deer and other animals. Instead, are the photographs caught in my camera trap, which does not hurt. I carry to my library pictured counterparts of birds and game as they live,—not views of suspended carcasses, which look like interiors of slaughter houses.

We came into the woods to rest, not to play a game of recreation more strenuous than the work of our livelihood-making. We would get close to Nature's center, sleep upon it, and from out of the ground absorb the tonic of the woods. There was just enough to do to keep us in good form, and give us appetites which wouldn't shy at dirt or bugs.

We ate, and slept, and thought,—and cut out thinking half of the time. We tramped up to the very heart of Nature, and beside her closed our eyes at the symphony of the rustling trees, which play a music more pleasing to the natural ear than the toot of orchestra horn or the trained screech of *prima donna.*

Except during the twilight hour, when we talked, and fought, and settled the vexed questions of the day,—each, however, in a different way,—we completely relaxed. Don forgot his money, Tom was too lazy to put a chip on his own shoulder, Walt

didn't even try to be funny (and consequently was), the Professor looked at the covers of his portable library and was content, while Arch actually stopped reasoning with himself and would swat a social fly without thinking why he did it.

When evening began to fall, however, and we had washed the dishes and pitch-forked the beds into shape, we shook off our lethargy, allowed ourselves to wrangle and quarrel, that we might not become so impregnated with the essence of Nature as to be unable to re-adjust ourselves when we returned to the scramble of society and science.

Think of it! Six Bostonians, partly recovered from the attacks of culture, actually getting down to a common earth, eating off a common table, drinking out of a common dipper, sleeping side by side without exchanging nightmares,—boys again, real boys!

We were irregularly spread out in front of the cabin, silently and placidly smoking our pipes, each one of us waiting for some other one to accumulate animation enough to start something.

I said, *all* were smoking our pipes. Let me retract one-seventh of my statement. Arch's mouth was free and clear. Lazily I gazed at him in unspoken amazement. Arch, the long-distance smoker of us all, with only his breath coming out of his mouth! What was the matter? Half unconsciously

I tried to unravel the riddle, then gave it up, and waited for time to act as its solver.

Inanimate Arch began to become animated. To the naked eye it looked as though he was doing something or about to do something. His actions certainly were suspicious. Evidently he was desirous of absenting himself. He got up, then sat down again, and repeated the process nine times. He began to fumble in his pockets. He withdrew his hand empty, looked around, then put his hand back into a pocket, thought better of it and withdrew it, and tried it again. Then, screwing his courage up to the sticking point, he withdrew his hand. Alas! this time it wasn't empty. His fingers firmly grasped,—but let me pause and ponder.

Shall I place the mark of un-live-out-able disgrace upon his brow, and brand him forever with the insignia of inexcusable folly? No, I will be merciful. Sometime Arch may double up, and a family spring about him. Is it fair, I ask, is it generous, is it humane, is it charitable, to dash a prenatal blot upon a possible posterity? It is not!

But wait. What of duty? Am I not bound to fire the facts, let them strike where they will? With beseeching charity before me, and drastic duty behind me, I will obey the dictates of my higher self, and tell the truth, the whole, dreadful truth, though it forever relegates Arch to a plane where only a

special miracle could hope to boost him up to the level of legal decency.

In Arch's hand was—a package of cigarettes.

Aghast I sat as one in a dream, while the symptoms of paralysis coated my tongue. I couldn't pull the cords that work the hinges of my vocal machinery.

Arch, shamefaced, and with guilt fairly oozing from him, yet with a determined look, which, translated, stood for a desire to dare the world, placed one of the little white rolls between his blushing lips, struck a match on the sand of his conscience, and began to blow out rings of insipidness.

Unable to utter a word, I kicked my companions, and silently pointed to Arch. As one man, they cast long, dwelling looks upon him; then Don, who always grasped emergency by the neck, reached him with a stride. With one hand holding his handkerchief to his nose, that he might not inhale the deadly gas, he grabbed him by the throat and shook the sense-destroyer from his mouth. Then Don silently returned to his place among us, while Tom gently led Arch to the edge of the water, to assist him in laving away the discolor and odor of his disgrace.

For a while we sat in silent contempt, then the Professor aroused himself sufficiently to remark, "I see that Professor Jettie, of Hardhead College, is investigating the textile industry, with a view to es-

tablishing a more economical basis of inspection, which will result, he avers, in considerably reducing the waste."

"Yes," I broke in, "Jettie has been in to see me."

"Did he outline his scheme to you?" asked Walt.

"Oh, yes," I replied, "he outlined several schemes. Jettie makes a specialty of outlining."

"What's he up to now?" interrogated Tom.

"He's going to tell the weavers how to apply the new efficiency ideas to making cotton. He says that the cotton manufacturers employ one inspector, or a sort of foreman, to twelve operatives, and that no one man, however proficient, can thoroughly inspect or superintend so many looms without a large loss in the waste of imperfect goods."

"How is he going to eliminate this waste?" asked Arch with interest.

"You tell," I suggested, turning to the Professor.

"Well," answered the Professor, "Jettie proposes to apply scientific efficiency to ignorant or automatic labor."

"But the manufacturers are not ignorant," interrupted Tom. "They are in business for money, and they won't stand for avoidable waste. Didn't it ever enter your book-crammed head that men born and trained in business ought to know how to do their business better than theoretical economists like Jettie, who can't drive a tack through a carpet and

hit the floor, and who never rolled a string into a ball, except in their minds?"

"Tom," returned the Professor, "you are one of those self-inflated idiots who can't see beyond the chalk line of convention. You are one of those fools, who, if left alone, would put a rock in one saddlebag to balance the grist in the other."

"Why not," replied Tom, "if you've a use for the rock?"

The Professor glared at him, but resumed.

"That's about what the cotton maker will continue to do until some scientific economist, like Jettie, sets him straight. I tell you, boys, the average business man sticks to the past, automatically performs his duty, and because his great grandfather did a thing, considers it a good reason why he should continue to do it in the same old-fashioned way, and he refuses to allow enlightened science to interfere for his benefit."

"Let's get somewhere," I suggested. "I favor efficiency in the doing of all things, but not fool efficiency. Let me take hypothetical figures. The inspector gets, say, two dollars a day, and the operator one dollar a day. Do you follow me?"

"No," replied the Professor. "But go on. We may understand you after a while."

I resumed. "If twelve operatives receive a dollar a day each, and one inspector receives two dol-

lars a day, then the operating expense is fourteen dollars a day."

The Professor nodded.

"Now, if you have, say, six inspectors, you raise the expense to twenty-four dollars a day."

The Professor was thinking.

"You have then added ten dollars a day to the cost of weaving a specific number of yards of cloth."

"But what about the saving in waste?" interjected the Professor. "Six skillful inspectors, instead of one, would probably eliminate a very large proportion of the poor work which now results from lack of proper superintendence."

"Granted," I replied, "but we have to deal with commercial economy, not purely scientific saving, and the amount gained would be the difference between the waste under present inspection and the less waste with increased inspection. Under Professor Jettie's system, the waste would probably be somewhat less, yet it would be accomplished with a very heavy increase of cost. Where does your economy come in?"

The Professor strove to discover an answer, but didn't find it. After a long pause he remarked, "But you save the waste,—make perfect goods."

"Shucks!" exclaimed Tom. "You and Jettie have got about as much of an idea of economy as had the amateur yachtsman, who rubber-coated the

bottom of his boat, at a cost of a hundred dollars a year to maintain, to keep out the bilge water, which he could pump out for a dollar and half a year."

"Bright boy!" exclaimed Walt, as he slapped Tom on the back. "There are times when your untrained sense is sharp enough to bore a hole in the armor of science."

"I'm not against any new doctrine that will do something," said Tom, "but before I adopt it, I want to try it out on the road. You scientific-efficiency fellows have got theory on the brain, and expect business men to swallow it before anybody knows what it's good for. For plain, unadulterated, unskimmed, sheer folly, give me a professor with an efficiency bug in his ear. Because he hears its buzzing, he thinks all the rest of the world has the same bug tickling it."

"But I don't see any reason to jump on Jettie," said Arch. "He's our leading exponent of the new science of efficiency. Have you read his book on the 'Elimination of the Illimitable'? It's a masterpiece of scientific research."

"Yes," replied Tom, "I've read it. He starts in at nowhere, and when he gets there, he establishes a gaseous base in the midst of chaos, and with that as a source of supplies, he branches out into the limitless unknown. He assumes that the incoming tide would have run the other way, if the laboratory

had taught it to change its mind before it began to flow. On this hypothesis he calculates that the drainage of the land would naturally disappear for keeps, because there would be no inflowing tide to bring it back. But unfortunately for him, the tides of water and of business refuse to run at his bidding, and he gets swamped."

CHAPTER XXV

GEORGE, the guide, while as independent as the captain of a yacht-club-registered catboat, and as cranky as a hen on eggs, was a genius of his kind, rough in exterior yet smooth inside. We soon became very fond of him. He attended to his duty with doglike faithfulness, made us do our part with systematic regularity, and all the time was doing those little things which added much to our material comfort.

He knew the woods as a sailor knows the winds and currents. His intuition was his compass, and his nose the needle. He guided us into hundreds of nooks and corners, where Nature hid her choicest charms, and which but for him we would have never discovered.

He had guided many people, and could read and describe them in a language more picturesque by far than the scorched rhetoric of literary word-painters, who slap artificial colors on their pages until Nature's rainbows weep as they fade away.

He had guided governors and grafters, congressmen and candidates, mayors and ministers, physicians and professors, captains of commerce, and

ladies of literature. Every class, every condition, of men and women, had followed him into the forest. He had seen them in all their moods, was familiar by contact with the idiosyncrasies of every breed which populates the earth. His head was a storehouse, filled to the top with experiences, which, if he could have written them out, would have outdistanced our marvelous magazine literature in variety of character-drawing.

George was ninety-nine per cent. man, an uncontaminated product of Nature. The open air had given him a hardy finish, which doesn't always thrive on the campus of athletic colleges, and the rains and streams had washed him into a freshness that the porcelain tubs of wealth don't seem to impart.

He wasn't altogether unfamiliar with the insides of books. He had enjoyed a high-school education, and didn't always use the language of the forest, or rather the woody words which are found more often upon the page of the novel than in the life of the great out-doors. He was the guide in reality, —not the overdrawn caricature of story.

Pity, indeed a pity, that men of Nature, like him, are not trained to harvest the fruits which grow so abundantly on both sides of the path that they traverse. If the class he represents could but use experience as readily as they get it, there would grow up a race which would meet the rest of the

world in any contest, and with bared arms and naked ideas knock the conceit out of the heads of injected intelligence, and pry the inhumanity out of the closed fists of avaricious commercialism.

"Yer fellows are all right," George said to us one day, after the table had been wiped off and the dishes scraped. "You're not like some folks I go out with."

"In what way do we differ from them?" inquired Walt.

"In about every way there is," he replied. "Yer hain't cranky, and yer not stuck up. Yer may be a little off, when yer thrash out the stuff none of ye, and most likely nobody else, knows about. But take yer as a whole, you're a pretty decent bunch, and I likes most of yer most of the time."

"Well said!" interjected Arch. "You don't propose to compromise yourself by a sweeping statement. And really, my friend, your commendation of us, while not complete, is a blame-sight better than we get at home. I suppose," he continued, "that you meet many types of people in the practice of your vocation."

"Guess I do!" replied the guide emphatically. "Had a crowd with me last month. Say, but they did beat the limit! Every one of 'em was dressed up to scare jack rabbits, even those that are half-tame and have got used to 'most anything. The men, they

wore those white pants nobody used to trampin' ever puts on; and not one of 'em would go in his shirt sleeves, when it was so all-fired hot yer could fry eggs in the sun. Gee! but didn't they sweat like drippin' moss. I asked one of 'em why he didn't peel off, and he just looked at me with a pityin' stare, and said, ' 'Cause we are following the proper precedent, given in a series of articles on the "Art and Science of Living in the Open Air," which appeared in the "Magazine of Propriety," and were written by Professor Somebody of the Society for Social Sodality, and illustrated by Herr Anything, the great landscape artist.' And would you believe me, those fellows wore nighties with blue trimmin' on 'em! I've eaten spoiled beans, and all kinds of canned stuff, and I've got a stomach tough enough to digest barbed wire, but, honest, those fellows made me sick.

"Now, yer folks 've got sense," continued he. "Yer don't put on any lugs. Yer take it easy, and don't kick at the grub, or raise a muss 'cause there's flies in the condensed milk, and pine needles in the butter. Yer jest set to, and get outside of what I give yer to eat, same ez us fellows do who've got used to livin' on it."

"We're deeply sensitive to your commendation," remarked Arch. "Before we part, I am going to ask you to write out the good things you have said about us, have the statement sworn to by a justice of the

peace, and we'll hand it out at the Round Table, when the gang we go with are pitching onto us."

"Say," said Tom, "tell us about some of the parties you have conducted."

"Well," replied George, after he had slowly and systematically shaved off enough tobacco to fill his pipe, from a chunk half the size of a brick, "I've had so many of 'em, I don't know where to begin."

"Tell us about the folks with nighties," suggested Walt.

"Can't do it," returned the guide emphatically, "it upsets my stomach to think of 'em. But I'll tell yer of a bunch of female women, and the dudes they brought with 'em, if yer don't mind. Of all the skirts I ever saw, they was the worst. 'Cept two of 'em, who were girls, they were old enough and scraggy enough to be grandmother hens,—long-nosed and lank, the kind your wife wouldn't kick at if yer went round the world with 'em. Had a fellow with me once, who used to call that sort of female 'safeties,' 'cause they didn't need no chaperone, or anybody to shoo the men off. They wore glasses that didn't tumble off unless you unsprung 'em, 'cause they had too much holdin' ground."

"How about the men?" I interrogated.

"Oh, they were cut off the same stump," replied the guide. "They were spindle-legged, and acted as though they were spavined. There wasn't any get-

up or even get-out to 'em. When they weren't sleepin' or eatin', they sat and thought, and most of the time only sat. They were so all-fired polite, yer had to say 'please' when yer told 'em grub was ready.

"But let me get back at the women," continued he. "Every one of 'em had a book which she lugged round with her, and, most likely, went to bed with, and they jest read and read, or made a bluff at it. They huddled together and talked about what they'd been readin'. I heard one of 'em say to the next one, 'Marguerite, isn't Brownin' jes too sweet for anything? I've been readin' his——' I don't remember what, and she went on gushin' about what I'll bet a huntin' dog 'gainst a singed cat she hadn't the slightest idea of. Same as those psychologists do, when they hain't got anything to say."

I kicked Arch. He reciprocated.

"Go on," I said.

"And the girl hard by her," resumed the guide, "she simpered, and replied, 'Yes, dearie, he's so delightfully delicious. Yer know, he jest seems like Kuyler's chocolates,' and then those women cuddled and nudged each other, and went at the book again.

"'Say,' said I to 'em, 'what yer readin'?'

"And the one who had the most length to her, she turned her watery-lookin' eyes on me, and lisped, 'Brownin', the immortal.'

"'Is he alive now?' I asked innocently. I'm not an educated man, but I've been to school, and for a spell we had what she herself called a bachelor woman, who carried her learnin' on both shoulders till it bent her. And she was always rammin' poetry and such into us, when we ought to have been loadin' up with the stuff we might use some time. But I did the ignorant act. You ought to have seen the girl," he resumed, after a meditative pause. "She just looked at me as though I was a toad too small to step on.

"'Why, my good man,' she murmured condescendingly. 'Brownin' died years ago.'

"'Did any of his rhymes get printed in the *Green County Clarion?*' I asked, ''cause the editor of that paper was a great feller for shovin' in verses.'

"Speechless she stared at me, too astonished to reply.

"'Marguerite,' she whispered, when her amazement had subsided enough to let her tongue loose, 'Did you ever!' and Marguerite replied, 'No, I never!' and the two Brownin' eaters got up and went into their cabin."

CHAPTER XXVI

"GIVE us another," said Tom.

"Let's see," replied the guide. "Did I tell yer about that big shoe manufacturer and his wife, who hired me summer before last?"

"No."

"Well, he was a corker, big and fat, weighed about a quarter of a ton with his boots off. He was up at Horsehead Landin,' stoppin' at the hotel. 'Twan't my regular stampin' ground, but I was up there 'cause it was kind o' dull where I ginerally hangs out. One mornin', the clerk, who knew me, introduced me to Mr. Hyde.

" 'My man,' he said, from somewhere down his throat, 'are yer engaged fer next month?'

" 'No,' said I.

"Well, after askin' a few questions, he seemed ter sort o' feel I'd do. So we got together. The clerk, he told me that Hyde had a few million sweatin' interest.

"As he didn't say anything about gettin' supplies, I told him that I would attend to 'em.

" 'I'll look out fer 'em,' says he. And he did; and he didn't.

"I've seen mean folks, chaps so close that they'd suck air instead of buyin' a drink. But he was the champion of 'em all; worse, by ginger! than the feller up north, who was so mean that he used to bottle his butter, and let the children rub the bottle onto their bread.

"He went up to the store with me, and, would yer believe it, he got jest enough grub to keep us goin' a week, if we got sick, to say nothin' about a month, with the kind of appetite even dyspeptics get when they're out in the woods. I knew I was in for it, so said nothin'. His wife, she was as close as he was, sometimes I thought worse.

"We started off, and got into the woods, bringin' up to where we are now. Old Hyde, he pulled off his shoes to save leather; and his wife, she'd most likely have done the same if she hadn't got feet that, judging by the way they looked with her boots on, would 've made good snowshoes, 'cause they were as flat and broad as griddlecakes.

"Hyde, he thought the world was just made fer him and nobody else. He had more conceit to the square inch than had any college grad I ever had charge of, 'fore he gets the education kicked up far 'nough for him to corral it. He was all the time talkin' 'bout his big factory and the number of pairs he turned out, and 'bout the thunderin' big deals he made, till I got to thinkin' that if it hadn't

been for him, we'd all 've gone barefoot, 'cause so far as I could see, from the talk he handed out, he made all the shoes in the world and a blame-sight more.

"He wasn't worth a cuss shootin', and couldn't fish, 'cause he had so much front to him, that if he tried it, he couldn't 've seen where the line struck the water 'less he'd had a pole a quarter of a mile long. But he wanted to shoot something, didn't care what, so I let him have my gun, and he'd set on a rock and jest wait, while the flies were busy at him.

"As I couldn't get any more provisions 'less I tramped and canoed twenty mile for 'em, I went lightly on what we had, caught a few fish, and brought down a squirrel or two. I managed to keep 'em half-filled, and by eatin' 'tween meals, when they weren't watching', I didn't suffer much.

"His wife, poor woman,—if ever a critter needed heavy fodderin', she did. She didn't carry any stock of flesh on her, but he'd have lived a year on what he had, and would 've looked a blame-sight better for it.

"One day he was sittin' on a rock strong enough to hold him, 'side a deep pool in the water. One of those busy bumblebees give him a push into it. He flopped about like a rhinoceros. I couldn't fish him out, 'cause I'm no Samson, so I poled him into shallow water, and rolled him ashore."

"Did you get your pay?" inquired Don.

"Oh, yes," replied the guide. "He saved enough on the grub he didn't have to settle with me and have some left over."

"I don't see how he did it," interjected Arch. "If he paid for the food, how could he realize sufficiently upon it to have more than he put out in the first place?"

"Easily," said Don, "if you know how to finance. An old uncle of mine, a Maine farmer, was so close a calculator that every time he sold a cow for fifty dollars, he'd make sixty-five."

"But," protested Arch, "I don't see how you can get more out of a thing than there is in it originally. It stands to reason——"

"Pull in your tongue, Arch," ejaculated Tom, "and get down where you belong. How many times have I told you that business isn't a complicated affair like your psychology is? It adjusts itself to conditions. If you had anything about you to carry it away in, I'd try to teach you something."

Arch entered the cabin, and hours afterward we found him there, among his machinery and books, working hard at some problem.

"Whatcher doin'?" Tom asked.

"Tom," he said solemnly, "you heard what Don said about his uncle's cow? I've dived into everything I have here, and I can't figure out how he

made sixty-five dollars when he received only fifty for the animal."

"You forgot the milk," Tom remarked drily.

Over Arch's face spread a look of intense satisfaction.

"Thanks," he muttered. "Why didn't I think of that?"

CHAPTER XXVII

IT rained!

No, it wasn't rain, for rain, according to the encyclopedia, the dictionary, the Old Farmer's Almanack, and the Government scientists who order the weather, is composed of separate and individual drops of water, which, from the sky, fall and don't dash upon the earth beneath. The liquid phenomena, which was exhibiting itself all about us, was a sky-topped waterfall which filled the air completely, with not a microscopic air space among it. It was solid water, one great and mighty flood.

Were we in it?

Oh, no, we were under it; for the cabin, although it looked leaky, was as tight as the collateral money-lender.

We were indoors, each with a pipe, and none of us seemed to want to say anything or talk.

Suddenly the door opened, and in came two tons of water with a man in the middle of it.

He was not wet,—he was water-logged.

After Tom had pushed him against the wall until the active water was pressed out of him, we helped him out of his clothes, and, from our limited ward-

robe, covered him with a shirt from one of us, a pair of trousers from another of us, while still another of us provided a coat for him.

The stranger was a splendid looking chap of forty or more, with a body and head that matched.

We took a liking to him at once, and bid him welcome. As we had only a pipe apiece, and as no amateur woodsman can maintain both cast and cigars, we took turns in lending him a pipe.

Somehow, his arrival, and the flood that accompanied him, thawed us out, and we began to play a game of conversation with the stranger taking his turn at trumping.

For some reason (most likely for no reason) we didn't tell him where we came from, and we allowed him to pay the Empire City the highest compliment by intimating that he thought we were New Yorkers.

After we had talked and re-talked for a while, Don turned to him and suddenly asked, "Where do you hail from?"

Proudly the stranger rose to his feet, and with out-blown chest exclaimed, "From Chicago!"

"Always lived there?" inquired Walt.

"Unfortunately, no," he replied, with a sigh and a blush. "It's no use for me to deny that I was born among the Cape Cod sand fields and emigrated to Boston in the days when the Hub of Conceit was beginning to appreciate its Spokes."

"Don't apologize," I said. "You were not to blame."

"What's the matter with Boston?" asked Tom.

"Everything!" exclaimed the Chicagoan emphatically. "Say, fellows, would you like to know how I escaped from Eastern cold storage, and got into a place where things move without being pushed or coerced?"

There was unanimous assent. We intuitively felt that something worth while was coming, and wanted it to come.

"Well, I'll tell you," he said, "and maybe some of you, if you ever go to Boston, will not take violent exceptions to all of my contentions. Boston, in my early days, was the biggest, happiest, most fraternal town in all creation,—the beautiful, satisfied, and slightly booming abiding place of peace and plenty, with not too much of either.

"As my mind harks back to those happy days of my youth, I wish I could renovate the great, lumbering Boston of to-day, and strangle the presumptuous progressives who filled up her tide-covered flats with the mixed mud of cosmopolitanism, and saturated her simplicity with a solution of society which upsets the tranquillity of respectability.

"My not yet fleeting memory suggests a longing for those days of Boston's yore, when something which resembled fraternity was at the bat, and good-

will pitched a ball a self-respecting player could strike at.

"Folks knew each other in those ante-city days, and commercial cussedness crawled in the shadows, with few avaricious enough to sell their sense for dollars.

"Now Boston is a great, big yardful of money monuments, erected by the successful fishers of men and suckers, who would rather bite at the golden hook, and get caught, than live upon the natural food provided by a natural mother.

"Boston and I grew up together, yet neither of us acknowledged the honor to the other. There were others who were responsible for the up-fall of good Boston into the money-mire of metropolitan mercenariness."

Our stranger friend paused, while we gasped in amazed appreciation.

When we got part way back to normal, Walt remarked drily, "Did all of you assimilate the epigrammatic ponderousness of his literary alliteration, and get onto his 'mercenariness'?"

"I did for one," said Tom, and turning to our guest, he remarked, "You're a wonder at word-slinging. Perhaps some of 'em are of doubtful coinage, but there's a ring to 'em which adds a metallic brilliancy to your talk, that's mighty refreshing in these days of diseased vocabularies, when men, and women,

too, paint their word-pictures with silken brushes too soft to hold the colors of life."

"Thanks," remarked the Chicagoan meekly, "I'm glad that you're able to follow me without over-exertion. Shall I go on, or have you had enough?"

"Let her spin," replied Tom. "Go as far as you like. We're used to listening to stuff that would peel the skin off a circus-cured rhinoceros. You can't upset our equanimity."

Thus encouraged, our friend continued:

"I entered business, became a changer of goods into money; learned the legerdemain of buying something at under price and of selling it at more than it was worth. I became a self-appointed captain of the industry of others. I levied my own tolls, and collected them, with the aid of a business gun. I was a smoking part of that nerveless engine of trade, which forever strives to make a dollar's worth of steam out of fifty cents' worth of fuel.

"As men run,—for no man of money-making ever walks,—I was considered a pretty decent sort of fellow, one of Boston's constant worshipers at the shrine of Get-There,—No matter How, But Get There!

"I got there. With my feet firmly planted upon the rock of expediency,—the foundation of commercial enterprise,—I fairly sweat respectability, and exhaled conventional goodness.

"By minding my own business, I got business from those who didn't attend to their business. I owned the land that others sowed and cultivated; and, at the harvesting, I gathered in their wheat that I might sell it to those who grew it.

"Underfed talent lifted its hat to me. The church sold me absolution at the price of pew rent, two per cent. off for cash.

"From the top of the wave, I waved my dollar-starred banner, and gayly danced upon the shores of society to the sweet, singing symphony of the lightly rolling ripples, which never got near enough to becoming a wave to foam or roar.

"Disintegrating Boston wanted what I was and had. I played the game of policy, and won at the rubber.

"Then reaction set in. I rebelled at being a puppet pulled by the strings of a bless-you, damn-you society, which loved its fellows with an affection so thin that it couldn't withstand the pressure of a handshake.

"I ceased to build houses of gold dust. I turned my face toward the Western Open, where men resembled men, and where women were of common gender.

"But before I left for the promised land of opportunity, I remained in Boston long enough to shake my fist at her bacteria-ated culture, and to

tell my fellows the plain, unvarnished, undressed truth about the shut-up-ness of the unventilated East."

He paused to give us opportunity to suggest that he continue.

We were game.

"Go on," we said.

"Hold!" interrupted Arch.

"Shut up!" shouted Walt. "Our guest is at the bat. You field-it for a while longer."

Our friend gathered himself together again, and resumed:

"A handful of I-want-to-be philanthropists, kid-gloved and of surface immaculateness, with antiseptic spades, turned up enough of the Fenway mud to scatter the decay of the ages.

"The smell, however, was historic. It came from the Sacred Past. Like babies' milk, it was bottled in bonded sterilizers, and became the bluing used in the wash-tubs of reform.

"These self-selected censors for revenue principally formed a heeling, twisted, deformed, loose-jointed association for the reincarnation of a bigger, bitterer, bigoted Boston. They appointed ten thousand net inactive committees, each chairmanned by a man of name, but not of action, and built a rostrum in every hall which was not located well enough to be used for a moving-picture show.

They accepted bids for privileges to speak, and to deliver, the inexhaustible spillings of the Boston mind, which didn't mind its business because it hadn't any business to mind.

"Thousands of degreed and pedigreed men and women swallowed the line, the hook, and the bait. The lettered minority attempted to paint the alphabet of asininity upon the sun-burned faces of the unlettered majority.

"Heaven closed her near-earth windows that she might not be suffocated by the whirling dust of ground-up dictionaries, which belched from the blowers of lecture hall and pulpit.

"Boston went reform mad, without being cross about it. She filled her smooth-bore mouth with wet words, and sprinkled, not soaked, her populace. (Hang that metaphor! It's mixed. But so was the stuff it tried to picture.)

"I joined the speech-rangers, but my rostrum occupancy was short-lived.

"Why? There were several reasons.

"There was to be a continuous performance of word-contests at the Old Museum of Departed Arts. Its fourteen halls had fourteen platforms. Fourteen men were to talk simultaneously against time and audience.

"I had Hall Number Thirteen,—an unlucky number for my hearers. I endeavored to close my ha-

rangue with one fell swoop of pent-up fury let loose. I would be eloquent, unique, impressive, epigrammatic, and even grammatical, and all else that goes to make up a ringing finale.

"'My fellows,' I shouted, 'what's the matter with Boston?'

"Then, I paused to give them a chance to answer the unanswerable. Striking what I imagined to be a heroic attitude, a sort of cross between Napoleon at Helena and Bryan in Convention, I waxed, I whacked, I grabbed the American bird of oratory by the claws, and soared above my hearers,—at the bird's expense. I fired my load, and blazed away after my ammunition was exhausted. I tangled myself in the thread of my remarks. Like a spent top, I wobbled. With a mighty effort I straightened up, and ran down with the following yell:

"'The yeast of the East is rising in the West, and men are going where there's room to throw a thought and catchers who won't muff it.'

"The applause was conspicuous by its absence. Not a hand, not a hiss,—nothing to show that I had said either something or nothing.

"Then and there I became an undesirable speaker, and my career as a Boston orator, philantropist, reformer, and cultivator of superannuated progress was nipped in the first shoot of its budding."

"Isn't this a good place for applause to come in?" suggested Walt.

Even Arch and the Professor joined in the hand-clapping.

"I'm 'most through," the Chicagoan said, "and you can rest in peace.

"'I said unto myself,'" he continued, 'why attempt to swim longer in a water too light to support my weight?'

"I was still young, my digestion was normal, and ambition had not forsaken me. I had some money, which I had pried from out the sewed-up Boston pocketbook.

"My business was of a movable character, and could be planted to grow in any commercial soil. So I moved it and myself to Chicago. There I have been for five years.

"In that wonderful city I found the Cream of the East, the men who had courage enough, and ambition enough, and sense enough to escape from suffocation and enter an air reeking with activity.

"In ninety days I was as much at home in my adopted town as I had been in the place of my youth and early manhood.

"Out there I combated fierce competition, and ran across obstacles and handicaps; but even those who combated me did it in that good-hearted friendly way

which takes the sting out of competition, and adds fraternity to rivalry.

"And I found culture there; not the weary, effete culture of the East, but the kind that made a specialty of distributing itself.

"The Chicago library didn't have as many books as its windowless counterpart in the East, but every book was working.

"But, enough, boys! I'm hungry. What you got for grub?"

We fed him.

After he was internally filled, we filed before him, and each of us, save Arch, in turn, made a grandiloquent five-minute address, calculated to impress him with our appreciation; and, perhaps, it did.

Arch remained silent, wrapped in thought and an army blanket. He was rummaging among the foothills of psychophysical mountains, hunting for the "last analysis."

"My friend," said Don, after the Chicagoan had made a characteristic reply, "the joke's on you. We're Bostonians, every one of us is of Boston, from Boston, and going back to Boston."

The Man from Chicago stood at attention. He blushed not, neither did he smile. "Boys," he replied soberly, "truth never apologizes, never retracts, but stands immutably upon her unmovable base, defying man and Boston."

Somebody turned off the water, the clouds disappeared, and our friend (for he seemed no longer a stranger to us) bid as a hearty good-bye, with a promise to call on us and dine with us when next he visited our city; and we jointly and severally accepted his invitation to make his house our home when in Chicago.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE reader, if he is alive at this stage of the book, has undoubtedly wondered at my ultra-prominent modesty and my sublime and heroic (apparent) desire to bill the exploits of others to the almost complete exclusion of myself. He has doubtless generated a warmth of affection for me, and has longed at times to hear more from me about what I said and did, as he, my friends, and I, have journeyed together.

But I will not allow him falsely to lavish encomiums of praise upon me, nor permit him to feel an appreciation which is not deserved.

With more faults than virtues to my credit, I am honest,—so filled with the triple essence of pure truthfulness, that I would rather starve on the crusts I earn than auto through this story on the gas I borrow.

I am *not* a man of modesty. In my lexicon no such word appears. I was born in conceit, for at my birth my father collected a hat from our doctor on the wager that his next arrival would be a boy.

Because I was the only one in the family who had any prospect of becoming a man, my parents handed

me the stored conceit of generations, and taught me all the show-off stunts which would throw me before the public eye and develop my prenatal egoism.

I am conceited, so filled with it that if I cast it off at this late day, I would be as nude as the undressed statues which connoisseurs have clothed with the unseen veil of Art.

When I started in to write this screed, I alternated pen with rubber stamps of capital "I's." I planted an "I" in the middle of the page, and wrote around it. Every other paragraph began with "I said" or "said I." I solar-printed my jokes, and magnified my puns. I strewed the bubblings of my brilliancy broadcast upon its pages. The sun of my personality scorched the paper. Every thought I could think was credited to me. The other members of the cast were but supernumeraries, with little to do save to serve as my background, and act as frames for my posings.

I wanted to name the book "Me and Mine."

An artist, to whom I had loaned money, painted my portrait as many times as the debt would permit, and if I had had my way the book would have begun with a dozen frontispieces of me, each representing an angle of my consummate cuteness.

The publisher's editor, however (may he never get his pay raised!), rudely tore out the portrait pages, and ripped out the lines of my glorying and

glorification, and left only the words I had used to connect the gems I had written for me to deliver, with the incidental expressions of the others, who were there merely as my foils.

The best part of this book is not in this book. It has been cut out, squeezed out, put out, by that rigid connecting rod 'twixt the brilliant author with his scintillating work and the money-making publisher—the man professionally known as the publisher's editor.

Nevertheless, I have copies of the sunshine and moonshine, the glares of humor, the ripples of wit, which were not allowed to effuse these pages; and some day, when I become famous, if luck passes my way, I will make a book of what isn't in this book, and this new book will be mine, all mine. Then this reflection of what I can do, this expurgated, torn-asunder book, will have a competitor, which will drive it into the cave of innocuous desuetude.

Now I will go back to the woods, because it is time to pack up for home. The days are growing shorter, the baked beans are sprouting in the can, the sugar just covers the bottom of the bag, the last sardine box is waiting for the can-opener, the cracker sack is lean and lank; in the words of Arch —"The opportune time has arrived for our exodus, and let us grasp it by the forelock, and quit."

I would have kept the reader in the woods for a

month more of pages, and have harassed him with descriptions of our harmless exploits, which never occurred in duplicate. I would have filled a book too large to sell at a reasonable price, with what the guide said; and would have builded an encyclopedia out of the sagenesses of Arch and the Professor,—but I am tired, not of the woods, but of writing about them.

So we went home, home to the city of cut-rate culture, to the abiding place of men and women, and others, who are thinking the faded thoughts of the gone, and drinking the stagnant water of the past.

CHAPTER XXIX

IN the cool of a settling September we were again at the Round Table. Don had had an antiseptic shave. Arch's hair had been trimmed to the professional length approved by the Authors' Club. The Professor was wearing a collar. Walt had had his trousers pressed; and Tom had just returned from the cleanser's, where his flowing beard had been renovated and the moss combed out of it; while I, in my red necktie, was not far behind the others in the appearance of respectability.

After the conversation had furnished gratuitous advice to the President of the United States, and expert counsel to the Mayor of Boston, and the leading problems of the day had been sifted through our minds and settled for the present, Don brought it down to where we were.

"Boys," he said, "I was at the shop yesterday, and things were moving, some of 'em fairly humming. Nobody seemed to have missed me. Green, my manager, met me at the door, shook hands, and remarked, 'Glad you're back, Mr. Bennett, but you needn't have hurried. Business never was better. Everything's running like a chronometer.' I opened

my desk, but there was nothing on it, not even a memorandum, save the reports, which had been properly O'Ked.

"'How's White doing?' I asked of my secretary, referring to a new man we had placed in charge of an important department.

"'He's a worker, and he's caught on in great shape; landed a big one yesterday, the one we've been trying to get for five years.'

"After a while I went down to the bank. Most of the fellows were there. They nodded at me, and nobody said anything. I wondered at it, because they hadn't seen me for six weeks.

"'How's business?' I asked of the cashier, after I had waited an hour for somebody to say something.

"'Good,' he replied. 'Better than it has been at this season for ten years. But why do you ask?'

"'No particular reason for it,' I replied, with slight irritation, 'but I thought I'd inquire if anything had happened since I went away.'

"The cashier looked at me for a moment, then remarked quietly, 'Have you been away, Mr. Bennett?'

"If it had been you," continued Don, looking at Tom, "I'd have knocked your head off."

"Play it was me," returned Tom.

"But there's a serious side to it," resumed Don,

without seeming to notice Tom's pleasantry. "It proves pretty conclusively that mighty few of us amount to anything, and most of us don't amount to that much. Here I've been away for a month and a half, and nobody has missed me, and most of the fellows who work for me didn't know I had gone. But the worst of it is that business has actually improved during my absence. Maybe," he continued thoughtfully, and as though talking to himself, "if I'd not come back at all, they'd have doubled it."

"Don," interrupted Arch soberly, "you are simply experiencing the unpreventable result of the natural law of accomplishment. Business-doing, although to the eye of the layman it is apparently at variance with the immutable laws of science, is not in fact removed from the great fundamental and underlying influences which determine and pre-determine the weight and measure of the inevitable result. Back of all action lies a cause for each and every movement, an impulse which compels obedience to it. You can no more escape it than can water refuse to respond to the call of gravity. You, as the chief manager of that peculiar activity, which you and your kin call business, have, by your innate or alleged ability, imparted to it an unseen yet powerful momentum, which will, when once established, carry on its work long after the creative energy which started it has been withdrawn."

Tom was getting uneasy, but a glance from Arch was sufficient to quiet him.

"You have built up," continued Arch, "a sort of automatic machine; and you, or your energy, is the mainspring of it, with many assisting springs represented by your officers and employees. You and they began action simultaneously. After all of these springs are fairly exerting their push-and-pull power, you may, with impunity, remove yourself for a time, and yet this voluntary absence on your part need not, and does not, necessarily discontinue or retard the motion of, or energy contained in, the mainspring, which is vested in you, or springs from you. It will continue to exert a pressure for days, and, perhaps, for years; and before it runs down, if that should occur, it will, with mechanical intelligence, notify the adjacent springs of your coming departure, and these, trained and tempered by you, will receive an incentive to extra exertion because of your withdrawal; and their combined and increased activity may furnish a greater force than is likely to occur when they are directly influenced or controlled by the immediate presence of you, the main or fundamental spring of them all."

The uneasiness of the silence betold eruption, but Arch bravely continued:

"From this reason,—which I have made so concise and plain that even Tom, though a fool, can under-

stand,—my dear Don, it is clear that you are not of inconsequence in the conduct of your business. It simply substantiates one of the great economic theories, which has demonstrated that the constant attention, or continuous application, of an initial energy is not necessary to the permanence of non-material activity. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Arch," replied Don gently, as he held back Walt's arm, which was bent in Arch's direction, "I understand that you are trying to understandingly express yourself, and I think that I comprehend what you are getting at, if I don't follow your confoundedly vague way of getting at it."

"It is well," responded Arch. "It would appear that you are approaching the foothills which surround the mountains of intelligence. There is a glimmer of hope for you, Don."

CHAPTER XXX

"BOYS!" exclaimed Don, after we had recovered from Arch's attack, "I've something up my sleeve."

"Roll up your sleeve!" ejaculated Walt.

"If I did," retorted Don, "somebody would get hit."

"Take your time," remarked Tom drily, "because if you do, maybe you'll reconsider and not say it."

"Boys," resumed Don, and we could see that he was serious, "I've got a plan which you fellows will tumble to. You know I never had an automobile,—partly because I could afford it. I thought I wouldn't risk my credit by running one of those symptoms of bankruptcy. But why not? Some of the autos we see are driven by men who can afford to keep 'em. I'm going to take a chance. I'll buy a touring car, and we'll enjoy a trip in it."

"Going to drive it yourself?" inquired Walt, with a twinkle in his eye.

"I'm not all fool net," returned Don. "No, I'll get a chauffeur to run it. I want the blamed thing to run, and it won't run if I run it."

"Allow me to offer my services," said the Professor.

"My dear Professor," replied Don gently, "I thank you for your kind offer, but I feel, we all feel, that it would be far better for you to act as advisor to the chaffeur, to be ever ready to come to his assistance when complications too intricate for his unscientific mind to master arise, than to burden yourself with the disagreeable labor incumbent upon the one who turns the steering wheel and attends to the stops."

The Professor looked satisfied, but was he?

"Before you get any farther," put in Tom, "I want to know whether this trip's going to be at Don's expense, or whether we're going to chip in."

"You're to be my guests," replied Don heartily.

"NO!" shouted Tom decidedly.

"Why not?" asked Don, and his face showed that he was a little nettled.

"I won't be a guest," replied Tom positively. "I ain't going to have Don chucking his generosity at me all winter. If I go, I'm going to pay my share. No getting under obligations for me."

"I'm with Tom," broke in Walt. "It's Dutch treat, or nothing. Do you remember that twenty-five cent cigar Don gave me last winter?"

"No."

"Don hasn't forgotten it," resumed Walt. "I've smoked that cigar eleven million times, counting the references Don has made to it."

"Let's get down to business," interjected Tom, turning to Don. "We appreciate your generosity, but you know that, under our self-established rule, each one must pay his own scot. As none of us," he continued, turning to the others, "have the price of a car, we've got to condescend to let Don furnish it. But we'll divide the expense of the trip into six equal parts, and go. What say you, fellows?"

The reply was a unanimous "Yes."

"Let's go and buy a car," said Don, who never transferred to the morrow what he could as easily do to-day.

We started for the Back Bay section, where residential doorsteps abut the broad entrances of garages and automobile salesrooms, which are planted by day and multiply by night.

The Professor was happy. His tongue was on a pivot and twirled while it wagged. He, the eminent physicist, the steerer of science in motion,—was it not fitting that he should act as chief consulting engineer? A disconnected train of motor cars ran out of his mouth. He juggled tires and carburetors together, collided limousines with touring tops, and tangled himself up in mixed metaphors of mechanical construction.

We entered one of those velvet-carpeted, plush-curtained, and tropical-tree-planted auto parlors, which are supernumerous nowadays, and which, in

point of numbers, outgeneral even the confectionery shops, where classic candy is molded into medieval shapes, and marketed with titles of remote etymology.

A gentleman in evening dress,—the historic twilight falls early on the made-lands of the Fenway,—greeted us at the portals, for the modern garage is too gorgeous to have a plebeian door. He didn't hail us with a hearty and businesslike "What can I show you?" which we hear in New York, and in other places, without a past, but instead, bowed at attention, and statuesquely awaited our pleasure.

Without vocal interference, we examined a highly colored vehicle, which looked as though it would be better adapted to adorn a plush-lined case than do duty on the road.

The Professor was in his element. He got under and over the car. He felt the pulse of the motor. He punched the rubber tires. He sat on the cushions, and jammed his fingers with the levers. He rattled off a lot of technical terms, some of which were undoubtedly unacquainted with the others, which paralyzed the sales-gentleman, who couldn't have understood more than every other sentence.

At last, tongue-tired and lame-backed, he remarked, "I think, gentlemen, that we had better visit other makers. This car, while it undoubtedly possesses most of the essential elements, which, individ-

ually and *en masse*, produce an acceptable result, does not contain, as I view it, the road-wearing durability which will enable it to render the service undeniably desirable in a vehicle intended satisfactorily to meet the vicissitudes of long-distance travel."

When the attendant regained consciousnees, we considerately withdrew, and moved on to the next. There we found another car, which, according to statements made by the man who had it for sale, had nothing in common with the one we had just seen, or with any other on the face of the road. It stood on a base of its own exclusive excellence. The factories of science, and the galleries of art, had impoverished themselves by contributing all they had, and some more, to the making and assembling of that machine. It possessed all the virtues of the main body of the motor decalogue, and its appendix also. It was one hundred plus per cent. pure,—spotless, perfect, unapproachable.

After listening for an hour to a specially prepared lecture upon that car, which its seller had memorized, Tom, with childlike blandness, asked softly, "How is it, my friend, that there is any other car on the road?"

But the question didn't feaze the salesman. Instantly he met the inquiry.

"There wouldn't be, if we could supply the demand."

"Granted," said Tom politely, "but how is it that you have any on hand? I see," and he glanced around him, "that you have a dozen or so unsold."

The salesman was floored. He was a post-graduate of a correspondence university of automobileia, and little of its mailed education had covered the selling side of the motor business.

"What do you think of it?" I asked Don.

"No good," he replied decidedly, "because it's too good. I don't want a perfect car. I wouldn't feel at home in it. I'm going to have one that is natural, that can go wrong once in a while, so that I'll know I'm motoring."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE next place looked like the rotunda of a Florida hotel. It was ruged, and decorated with trees, and plants, and flowers. The attendants were in royal purple uniform and shod in soft rubber. We felt out of place with our everyday clothes on. Here wealth and shoddy met, and the latter were the best customers.

I can't explain the paradoxical statement of a friend of mine, that "folks who haven't any money always have money to buy cars with;" but it's true.

Certainly the display ravished the eye, and subdued the bargain instinct. It was a hall of seduction, a den of splendor, where people lose their senses, and their dollars. On royal divans rested symphonies in paint, metal, and rubber,—art creations, which were too beautiful to be guided by mere man upon common highways.

The Professor was happy. No stenographer could have written his jargon, and a phonograph would have broken down if it had tried to record the babel of technical terms and queer phrases, which would have choked him if his mouth hadn't been trained to pass them.

Mystified and muddled, bewildered and twisted, we backed out of that emporium, and turned down a side street, where there was a small and unpretentious building, with a single auto in the window, and one man and one desk back of it. We entered, and the single occupant welcomed us in a businesslike manner.

"Why, Richard, are you here?" exclaimed Walt, who recognized the seller as an old comrade. He introduced us, with the remark that his friend was the only auto dealer in the world who was on speaking terms with the truth.

"You'll pardon me," said Don, as he took a long, lingering look at him, "I'm somewhat of a connoisseur of curiosities. Do you plead guilty to Walt's charge?"

"Oh, no," replied the salesman with a smile, "I don't pretend to be honest. What's the use of making a claim that nobody would believe, even if you substantiated it? Then," giving Walt a hearty slap on the shoulder, "if I were honest, do you think I would hire Walt for my barker?"

"No!" we exclaimed in unison.

But, honest or not, this man talked what was either the truth or a good imitation of it. He was frank, and didn't claim for his car anything beyond the ability of human ingenuity to produce. He called our attention to some of the unavoidable outs,

without forgetting to present the advantages emphatically.

It didn't take Don long to make up his mind.

"I'll take it," he remarked quietly. "Give me a receipted bill, and I'll hand you a check."

"By the way," inquired Don, after the trade had been consummated, "can you recommend a first-class chauffeur? I want an agreeable fellow as well as an engineer."

"I know just the man you want," replied the salesman quickly. "He lost his job yesterday. His employer failed with two mortgaged autos for assets. I'll telephone him."

Just then a young man entered the store.

"Here he is, by good luck!" exclaimed the salesman, as he introduced us to "Jim." "If he has another name, I never heard of it," he explained.

"I think I had two names years ago," said Jim, with a smile, "but, honestly, I've forgotten what the other one was."

Jim certainly looked his part. There was something about him which made one look at him twice, and long to continue to look at him. He was of medium size, solidly built and well proportioned. His red hair allowed his perpetual smile to pass over his head in undulations of good fellowship. Of his competency there was no doubt, for the credentials

he showed us proved his efficiency and experience, and Walt's friend vouched for his integrity.

Jim was a "find." He possessed a Nature-given refinement and an open-air brightness as delightful as they are rare in these days of cosmetic culture and massage polish. He was alert, and prepared to meet emergency on call. He had escaped book-learning, but carried in his head what lazy men leave on their shelves. What he knew, he had with him, ready for immediate delivery. His grammar was a little shaky, and he could split an infinitive at twenty yards. But what he said connected with sense, and you knew what he was driving at, even though he didn't always keep in the middle of the road of macadamized construction.

He replenished his stock of anecdote faster than he unloaded it. There was a natural humor about him that invited the kind of laugh one doesn't feel ashamed of.

Don had no foolish notions about the treatment of employees. He reasoned that a man good enough to run his car, and associate with him on the road, was fit to sit at his table.

Jim became our companion, not our servant.

Right here I am tempted to tell you what I think of the folks who draw the social line so taut that they cannot exercise in the little roped-off spot they think is society. I used to get mad at them, but

now when I see them, my eyes fill with tears,—the flow of pity,—and I feel like taking them by the hand, and gently and quietly leading them into the exclusiveness of some far-away wilderness, and leaving them there, to eat the dry bread their ancestors baked and to drink the water which is filled with the bacteria of the culture of the past.

Jim was made of the stuff you hunt for when you have an order to deliver a load of genuine manliness. He was one of those unmedaled heroes, who would jump into the water with their boots on to save a drowning mongrel society girl, of the kind who waits for a proper introduction before her petty propriety will allow her to thank the fellow whose self-forgetting generosity would impetuously risk a life worth saving, to haul in a lump of human worthlessness.

Jim had traveled with all sorts and conditions of humanity and inhumanity. He had piloted an express truck, and had guided the car owned or hired by that altogether too prevalent product of modern society, commonly known as the snob,—not necessarily a representative of the newly rich, for the always rich are not a whit behind their new neighbors in their unquenchable thirst to drink liquid cash out of a golden goblet, always to be seen of men.

Yet Jim was never forward nor conceited. He kept his place, except when we pulled him out of it,

and never by word or action did he take advantage of the good fellowship we offered him.

Some day, somewhere, I don't know where, folks like Jim are going to play the first cornet in the Grand March of Progress, where unaccompanied money cannot buy a clear title to anything hitched to anything that won't budge when the wind blows.

Handicapped as Don was by the advice handed him by the Professor, he managed to fit up the car to the full satisfaction of Jim, to whom, strange as it may seem, the Professor had taken a great fancy. But I think that Jim was primarily responsible for the friendship on the part of the Professor. Jim was a diplomat. He sized up the Professor the first time he met him, recognized his theoretical knowledge; and, as a shrewd student of mechanics, he got more real good out of him than any of his pupils were able to extract in the mechanical atmosphere of his academic workshop.

The Professor's large lack of practical information about autos and their accessories, which increased his belief that he knew all that there was to know about them, bothered Don not a little, for the Professor assumed to dictate what should and should not be purchased until Don turned him over to Jim, who handled him like a nurse does a child.

The question of search lamps came up. Don left it to Jim, after the Professor had insisted upon get-

ting a kind which was a has-been before it began to shed its irresponsible rays.

"Professor," said Jim, "I want to show you a lamp the inventor tells me he built after reading one of your books, that on the 'Scientific Search for Sunlight.' "

The Professor fairly radiated affability. He accompanied Jim to the light-maker's shop, and enthusiastically recommended the purchase of a lamp which was the opposite of the one he had insisted upon Don's getting in the first place.

When science won't yield to sense, try diplomacy, and let Jim, or some fellow like him, apply it.

CHAPTER XXXII

"MEET me at the club at eight o'clock, Monday morning," said Don, as we parted.

We were there, each with a dress-suit case, save Arch and the Professor.

"Where are your bags?" inquired Don, when he noticed that they were singularly unprovided for.

"Here's mine," answered Arch, as he presented an envelope box tied with black and tan shoe-strings. "I knew there wouldn't be much room, so I brought the least possible baggage."

"Whatcher got in there?"

"A pair of pajamas, a comb, a tooth-brush, a cake of soap, and an extra shirt."

"Must be made of invisible cloth," remarked Don drily.

"Don't you think you're taking too much for a two-weeks' trip?" inquired Walt.

"No," replied Arch soberly. "I don't see how I could get along with less."

"Cut out the soap," remarked Tom.

"You don't need an extra shirt," suggested Walt.

"Where's yours?" asked Don, turning to the Professor.

"Right here," replied the Professor, proudly exhibiting one of those green cloth bags, which lawyers use because they make the papers in them look as though they had been tampered with.

"Got your dress-suit and overcoat in there?" interpolated Tom.

"Why, no. Do you think I'll need them?" questioned the Professor.

"If you've any extra room," remarked Walt, "I'd like to have you shove in a couple of boxes of cigars."

But Arch and the Professor had reëntered the club house. In a moment they returned, accompanied by four bell boys loaded to the necks with books and other stuff.

"What's that?" exclaimed Don, in amazement.

"Just a few things I want while away," answered Arch.

"I brought along a few of my models," explained the Professor.

Don turned to the bell boys.

"Take that truck back," he ordered decidedly.

"Say, you educated fools," he exclaimed, turning to Arch and the Professor, "do you take this car for a baggage truck, and me for the keeper of an asylum?"

Neither Arch nor the Professor made any reply. They gazed longily at their disappearing parapher-

nalia, but at the "All aboard" of Don, climbed with the rest of us into the car.

Jim had already cranked the motor, and, with blessings, and other remarks, from the dozen or so Round-Tablers who stood at the door, we were on our way.

We turned into Commonwealth Avenue,—styled, by those who don't live there, or are unacquainted with its residents, the great artery of blue blood; but many years ago it changed its consistency to liquid cash, and is the modern abiding place of the dollars of the money-pumping hearts of wealth,—and were soon out in the open, among the cliff dwellers of the flats and the tax jumpers of unimproved lands.

We ran at moderate speed, because we had good sense, and because Don was not a member of that increasing clan of law breakers, who respect no ordinances which interfere with the speed of their selfishness. Jim drove the car with painstaking caution. He didn't try to pass the racers, who, unfortunately, are more likely to injure others than themselves, nor did he turn sharp corners at a breakneck pace.

Judging by the way the autos passed us, we were the only law-abiding citizens on the road. Sometime the courts will fine the poor and jail the rich, and then there will be at least the appearance of consideration for the rights and safety of others. It

will then be as wicked to swing a golf stick on the grounds of the Country Club, on Sunday, as it is to play a game of scrub ball on the public parks.

Law is now, however, only convalescent. By and by it will be strong enough to attend to its business.

At noon we reached the Oldtime Inn, one of those tumbled-down, propped-up hostelries, which Boston's undertone thinks that it appreciates. It was a farm house a century or more ago, and in its unventilated interior were born and raised the folks we might not have reverenced had we lived with them, eaten their hog meat, and drank out of the disease-spreading bucket which hung in the well of typhoid.

The whole affair, inside and out, had been remodeled, cut up, and patched up until it looked like a jumbled mixture of what originally was, was several times changed to be, and now is, each succeeding occupant having added something without taking anything away. It was a shambly, shamefaced monument of an intermixture of modern interference and long-ago irregularity.

It is, however, a success, and will continue to be as long as Boston's hopper turns out effeminate men and bachelor women with stomachs fitted to assimilate only the stale bread and dried cabbages of the crops of decayed ancestry, and with brains which are but the left-overs of an unsuppressible past.

The floor of the living room and the office re-

sembled the undulating surface of the troubled waters. Upon the walls hung framed letters of old-time men and portraits of old-fashioned women. The chairs were historically uncomfortable, and the window panes were so close together that if it hadn't been for the glass, a Jerseyman would have taken them for mosquito nettings. The parlor, with its hair-cloth furniture and its up-to-date piano and electric lights, reminded one of a half-shaven face,—hair on one side and razor-swept on the other.

Borrowing a pen from one of the dozen post-card fanatics, who occupied all of the writing space, Don registered for us. An imitation of a town crier, with a colonial coat and a modern crease in his trousers, gave the ancestral dinner-cry through an up-to-date megaphone.

We entered the space walled off as a dining room, which was once occupied by three low-studded chambers and a shed.

"By all that's queer!" exclaimed Tom, as he took up the bill of fare. "Look at this."

Here was an old American house, fairly saturated with tradition, with a bill of fare written in the impossible vernacular of a French-crammed sophomore. Not a single dish bore an American title. In desperation Don ordered the waiter to bring him "that," as he handed her the sheet upon which the eatables were scheduled.

The dinner was about what you would get at a second-rate boarding house, except that each viand had a historical flavor its exclusive own, and the sauces and gravies carried an atmosphere which fairly smelled of the days when meat was parboiled, and all the vegetables were cooked in the same water.

The room was so musty that we didn't have to be told that we were temporarily occupying the abode of long-ago sleeping generations, some of whom were evidently with us. In nook and corner rested the cob-webbed dust from their last sweepings.

Filled with historical atmosphere and some food, we paid two dollars apiece,—twenty-five cents for what we ate, and a dollar and seventy-five cents for the air that surrounded it.

The afternoon run brought us to the foothills of the mountains. We drove up to one of those big boxes of rooms, garnished with a fringe of verandas. It was the Hotel de Caste, erected by the amateur owner of a dairy, who was looking for a profitable market for his registered milk and pedigreed butter.

By the use of a poetical booklet and fashionably adjectived announcement, it had attained that peculiar position which society labels exclusiveness, but which means only that its patronage is limited to the folks with the price about them,—the patronage

of that class of society soapoids, who have no appetite save for the stuff that is served in imitation Havelin and the seconds of imported crockery.

Men in waiter's uniforms, and who may wait upon the waiters when merit becomes the criterion of society, wilted their high collars in the breezeless rotunda; and women, overcovered below and underdraped above, listened to meaningless words and simpered back meaningless replies. And yet these puppets, pulled by the strings of society, without heart, sense, or gumption, thought that they were enjoying relaxation in the open.

In single-windowed rooms they breathed the air they had brought with them, and three times a day they swallowed the gravies of mysterious viands, so oversauced that tripe looked like liver and tasted like quail, and the pies and puddings which contained the odors of the laboratory in which they were compounded.

The size of our auto was sufficient to unbend the dandy clerk, who ordered six "fronts" to surround us, although our baggage remained in the car. Don registered for all of us, including Jim.

"Seven rooms with connecting baths," he said.

"But there are only six of you," replied the clerk.

"Seven," replied Don, "including the chauffeur."

The clerk stared at us, immediately in-drew his

politeness, and remarked stiffly, "The chauffeur will occupy a bunk in the garage."

"Not much," replied Don decidedly. "He's to have as good a place as any of us."

"Sorry," said the clerk stiffly, "but this is a high-class hotel, and its refined patronage will not permit servants to occupy guests' rooms."

"Is that so!" returned Don drily, and then, as he pointed to a jaundice-faced bundle of fatty degeneration, who was passing near us, he questioned, "Is that a sample of your refinement?"

"That's Major Morse, the great fertilizer king," said the clerk solemnly. "He stays here all summer."

"My friend," replied Don impressively, "I think too much of my chauffeur to expose him knowingly to contagion, and the rest of us wouldn't care to be disinfected. We appreciate your condescension, but, really, we're not fit to mingle with the human collection you carry in your menagerie. We'll go where men are put up for the night."

We returned to the car, and in a few minutes were alongside of a small and modest summer hotel, which had an air of neatness and respectability that didn't need evening dress and its accompanying follies as an advertisement.

We were given the rooms we asked for, and none of us, including Jim, was discriminated against.

Here we found all the necessary comforts, and none of the useless luxuries which snobdom demands.

Within the dining-room sat with their families a half-dozen men known commercially to Don. After supper he introduced us.

"Boys," he said, when we were alone under one of the big trees, "do you know, any one of the men I introduced you to could buy Hotel de Caste, more than duplicate the aggregate income of its inmates, and have enough left over to keep the wolf from getting nearer than the next street. I recognized a dozen or so of the men at that gilded maze of fashion, and some of 'em are depositors in my bank. Many of 'em, I happen to know, are hard up, and our bank wouldn't discount their paper if endorsed by most of the rest of 'em."

"But how do they do it?" inquired Tom. "Board is expensive where they are, and I take it for granted that most of them have autos with chauffeurs, and that some of the women have lady's maids. It takes money to live the way they do."

"Yes," replied Don drily, "it uses up all the money they have, and all they can borrow, and they go back strapped."

"You don't mean to say," inquired Walt, "that all the occupants of that golden cage are impecunious?"

"Oh, no," replied Don. "Shoddy never inhabits

a place wholly unoccupied by wealth. The fashionable hotel manager, if he knows his business, always gets into his house a few men with property, who, although wealthy, act and feel like snobs."

"Do you know," remarked Arch, "that in no other place can we find so plentifully distributed the material for the study of social psychology, as at the summer resort? Here you get an assortment of human samples, such as is not likely to come together anywhere else."

"How about the theater or opera?" asked Tom.

"You don't find them there in their full activity," replied Arch. "There may be as large a variety, but they are separated into groups, and don't move about, or express themselves, or associate one with another"

"Guess you've never put in much time at a Boston theater," retorted Tom. "'Don't move about!' Gee whiz! don't they? For the life of me I can't see why they choose an auditorium for their conversation-playing. I have many a time vowed I wouldn't again attend a performance at any of our high-toned playhouses. It's mighty seldom that you can see the beginning of a play because of the folks coming in, or the last of a play because of the folks going out, or much of the middle of it because of the tongue-wagging and candy-chewing of your neighbors. Many a time I have resolved to

confine my entertainment-going to the cheap houses, where the audience knows that it must keep still or get out. But pardon me for interrupting, Arch."

"Acceptance of your view of the case," replied Arch seriously, "does not controvert the tenets of my contention that the summer hotel is the great melting-pot of society, in which are amalgamated the several and diverse elements of the body politic."

"Cut out the amalgamation," interjected Walt. "They may get into a mixture all right, but they don't amalgamate so anybody can see it."

"Rather than argue with one of your species," replied Arch, "I will admit the correctness of your diagnosis, particularly as it does not materially interfere with the burden of my assumption."

"If it is burdensome," remarked Tom drily, "why don't you ship it by freight and not try to express it yourself?"

"One of us has got to shut up," demanded Arch, with the emphasis of irritation. "Take your choice. Shall it be Tom and Walt, or me?"

"What's the matter with all of you keeping still?" sighed Don sleepily. "Let's go to bed."

We went, and the solution of another great psychological problem was tabled before it had a chance to develop into something probably not worth while.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AFTER a hearty breakfast of food that is food, with quantity so mixed with quality that when eating it you felt that you were accomplishing something, we started northward.

The highroad ran alongside of about everything that Nature contributes to the pleasure of folks who don't give preference to the artificial, and who prefer to see originals rather than spend their time with imitations.

Valley ran into hill, and hill into mountain. Here and there a shining streak of silver smiled at us, then darted away as though playing hide and seek with sunshine. The friendly breeze fanned our cheeks, and the cool, bracing air clipped off half of the years of our ages, till Arch forgot to reason and the Professor was at peace. We were in the circle of radiating scenery, where each turn of the eye brought new beauties to admire.

But what's the use of attempting to paint Nature with a typographical brush? Let others, who can't do it, make a mess of it. When wonder-drinking, better keep your tongue at "steady," or you will check the inflow.

After a while Jim remarked, "Looks like fish in that stream."

"Think so?" asked Don.

"Why not?" inquired Tom.

"Well," remarked Don, "I waded ten miles for an inch and a half of fish hereabouts, and when I got it, I gave it back to the lonesome waters."

We didn't stop to try our luck and patience.

"Speaking of fishing," remarked Jim, "have I told you the best fish story I ever heard?"

"No."

"I was up in the Rangeleys three years ago," said Jim, "chauffeuring for a fellow named Colin Campbell Cameron Scott."

"Was he a Scotchman?" inquired Arch innocently.

"Guess so," answered Jim. "At any rate he wasn't Irish. He was the biggest bunch of big 'I' this side of total conceit. He knew more than it all. There wasn't a thing he hadn't done, nor anywhere he hadn't been."

"How could he have done everything and been everywhere?" interrupted Arch soberly.

"Hold your tongue, Arch," ejaculated Walt. "Go on, Jim."

"We were at one of those big log-cabin camps on an inlet just off the lake. Evenings we got together round a fireplace, and each took his turn at

lying. There was a fellow who'd summered there about twenty years. According to his tell, he'd caught more fish, and larger ones, than the whole State of Maine ever had. He and my boss got at each other, and, say, it was fun. The fur would have flown, if either of 'em had had any."

"'Talk about your big fish,' said the Scotchman, 'you ought to see what we catch in the Scottish lakes. There ain't none to reach 'em by a foot up here. We don't think anything of pulling in a hundred or more of ten-pounders in a morning there.'

"Then the other fellow would let loose, and spring sizes on us you'd have to go twice with a yardstick to measure, while the rest of us sat and listened.

"By and by a little, wizened-up chap, who'd been keeping still in a corner, spoke up.

"'I've been listening to your talk,' said he, 'and I ain't going to say I think either one of you have been stretching the length of your fish, 'cause I've seen fish so long that yourn would look like cunners alongside of 'em. Any of you chaps ever've thrown a line off of the coast of Labrador?'

"'No,' replied a dozen of us.

"'Well, I did, summer 'fore last. Some of us chartered a schooner, and spent a couple of months up there. One day we got into a sort of cove where the water was smooth. We went ashore, where we found an old shanty. As we'd been living aboard

ship for a few weeks, we thought we'd camp out awhile on shore, so we brought over a lot of bedding, etc., and put in a week.

"'One morning, when the other fellows were sleeping, I thought I'd surprise 'em by giving 'em a fish breakfast, so I went out on the rocks and hove a line. In about ten minutes I'd hauled in about twenty of the biggest fish I'd ever set eyes on.'

"'What were they?' asked the Scotchman condescendingly.

"'Don't know,' replied the chap who was telling the story, 'but they were biggers, fourteen times larger than anything I'd ever caught.'

"'Maybe they were whales,' remarked the other fisherman derisively.

"'Whales, you fool!' exclaimed the Labradorian, 'I baited with whale!'

"The Scotchman and the other braggart spelled each other in shutting up."

"Jim," said Arch soberly, "how was it possible for your friend to affix a whale on to his hook, assuming that the hook was of sufficient caliber to be used for that purpose? And if he did accomplish this apparently impossible feat, how did he, unaided, land his catch?"

The motor stopped with a jerk. There were questions in Arch's philosophy that would check the flow of even an enlarged Niagara.

CHAPTER XXXIV

WHILE none of us, save Don, had his name upon the State's auto register, and, like a convict, was known by number, we had ridden in rubber-necked, sight-seeing autos, and had accepted free invitations from motor-car friends. Consequently we were familiar with auto etiquette. With the exception of the Professor, we ignored the stoppage, and appeared not to realize that we were not in motion.

For this silence, Jim was duly thankful. There are times when shut-up-ness is the best aid to the injured.

"Did I tell you a good one on Arch?" Walt inquired, to fill up a gap in the conversation.

"No," replied Tom, "but go ahead, and get it out of your system. You're bound to spring it sometime, so let it off when we are feeling strong enough to stand it."

Thus encouraged, Walt began:

"You know the Future Club?"

"I've heard of it," Tom replied. "You, and Arch, and the Professor belong to it, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, it ought to suit Arch and the Professor, but I don't see where you come into it."

"Why not?" asked Walt, as he fell into the open door.

"You've some sense, altogether too much to fraternize with that crowd of mouth-workers, who, when they get together, pump wind enough to give steerage way to all the flying machines the sky can accommodate."

"Better whirl with the wind than stagnate in holes," retorted Walt. "Maybe we don't get there while we talk there, but if it wasn't for the kind of breezes we stir up, some of you outsiders would find the air mighty close."

"I'm willing to give talk the credit it's entitled to," responded Tom, "but somehow I like a little stiffer stuff back of it,—something to start up with, or something for it to blow against."

"It's there all right," replied Walt, "but some folks are so wind-proof you've got to peel 'em before you'll find a crevice sensitive enough to feel anything short of a tornado."

"I went there once," remarked Tom, "when you fellows got up and roasted Japan, Roumania, Scandinavia, Bolivia, and the tip ends of South America and Africa; and you braves just sailed into abuses too far off to feel the little typhoon you started. Why don't you get nearer home once in a while?"

"We do sometimes," responded Walt. "Do you recall our crusade against the present deplorable condition of the modern drama?"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Tom. "I read about that in the papers. It made about as much of an impression as would the kid gloves you chaps wear when up against the boxers in the real ring. You hemmed and hawed, generalized, and then closed up with a selected lot of resolves couched in language which even the dictionaries shy at, too weak and lifeless to bother a feather in a vacuum. Your meetings remind me of a big pump on exhibition at the Mechanics' Fair. It took up a lot of room, was painted red, with brass trimmings, and made a noise. But it pumped water out of a tank back into the same tank. That's what I call wasted energy,—a sort of curved bullet that hits the fellow who fired it, and doesn't interfere with anybody en route."

"Now that you've relieved yourself, Tom," said Walt calmly, "I'll proceed with my story."

"Wait until I light my pipe," said Tom. "I cannot give proper attention to two important events at the same time."

"I am sure that I will be interested in any narrative that concerns my learned friend Arch," called the Professor from under the car. "What big discovery did he make?"

"Discovery nothing!" resumed Walt. "It's

what he didn't do that I'm going to tell you about. A year or so ago I was appointed stated speaker at one of the Future Club meetings——"

"How did you work it?" interrupted Don.

"Merit,—pure, undefiled merit did it," responded Walt. "Occasionally real talent is recognized."

"Go on," said Don, "guess we can stand it."

"If you fellows have any more interruptions to sling, I pray you chuck 'em now. I'll not start until I'm sure of a clear course."

"Cast off your fasts, and get into the stream," said Don.

"Weigh anchor and let her go," remarked Tom.

"Look out for rocks!" exclaimed Don. "It looks shallow."

"Head her up into the wind," remarked Tom.

"Isn't it most time to tack?" inquired I.

"How can he tack before he is under way?" asked Arch seriously.

"It's your turn," said Walt, shouting to the Professor. "If you have any flings to sling, let her went."

But the Professor was too far under to hear.

"I'll tell this story to Jim," said Walt quietly.

"What's Jim done?" asked Tom.

Walt didn't reply for a moment, then at the request of Don he resumed.

"Well, it was my day at the club. I had been

mighty busy, and hadn't had time to fix up anything, but I didn't want to disappoint the large gathering which had braved the storm to hear me."

"One of those winds which doesn't blow good to anybody," interrupted Tom.

"Would the disappointment have damaged them?" queried Don.

"Boys!" shouted Walt, "I'm going to tell this story if I have to chloroform you! Will you have it now, or get it later?"

"Better now," said Tom resignedly.

"As I hadn't prepared my speech, I had to talk on the spur of the moment," continued Walt.

"Did the spur hurt you?" asked Don sympathetically.

Walt took no notice of the remark, but resumed:

"You know that most of the speakers read from manuscripts——"

"I believe you," interjected Tom. "If it weren't so, they'd be talking still."

But Walt continued:

"So I thought I'd do a double act,—explain how I was fixed, and hit 'em at the same time. I got up and said: 'Fellow members, I'm here without a written speech. Unfortunately I've been too busy to give the subject necessary preparation.' Then I stopped, so as to get 'em in a condition to appreciate what was coming. Striking a dramatic atti-

tude and rolling my eyes, I pushed out both my arms, and remarked, 'I'd rather be an extemporaneous fool than a premeditated ass.'"

Walt paused to receive the appreciative laughter he confidently expected. But not a lip twitched, nor an eye danced.

"What's the joke?" asked Tom quietly.

"Maybe you're both," I suggested.

"Where does Arch come in?" inquired Don soberly.

Walt glared at us, and casting a look of sublime pity upon us, he continued:

"Arch was there. He'd been eating a dinner at my expense, and was naturally in a condition to appreciate my humor."

"Better feed us before you start another," suggested Tom significantly.

But Walt kept on.

"Arch joined in the burst of laughter that filled the hall."

"Then the hall wasn't empty?" interjected Don.

"If you'd been there, it would have been emptier," retorted Walt. And he continued:

"After it was all over, Arch came to me and said, 'Walt, old boy, that "extemporaneous fool" idea of yours caught the crowd. Was it original with you?'

"I told him that it was.

"'Best thing you ever said,' continued Arch. 'I'm going to use it in my business. Next time I lecture, I'll spring it on the audience.'

"I didn't see Arch for a week or two. When I met him he was boiling with rage, and he overflowed on me.

"'Say, Walt, you chump,' he exclaimed, 'next time I work off any of your old stuff, I'll be older than I am now!"

"'Where did you spring it?' I asked.

"'Went up to Concord night before last,' he replied, 'to lecture on Social Stagnation, and I threw that remark of yours at the audience. But I didn't get a hand, nobody laughed, and it fell flat.'

"'When did you let it loose?' I inquired.

"'Oh,' replied Arch soberly, 'I didn't think of it at the beginning, so pushed it in as a sort of climax.'"

Arch had been listening intently, but didn't join in the general laugh. Instead he turned to us, and asked, "What's the matter?"

But we didn't tell him.

CHAPTER XXXV

WHILE the conversation held us in its grip, and we were oblivious to outside influences, our auto was standing still, either because Arch's vocabulary had clogged the bearings, or for inside reasons. Hitherto there hadn't been a hitch to our going.

Jim had quietly and systematically set to work, and with marvelous self-control didn't resent the stream of technical questions thrown at him by the Professor, who, devoid of coat, was sprawling under and crawling over the machinery, working persistently with his mouth. At last, Jim, in desperation, grabbed him by the arm and forcibly led him to a place by the side of the road, where he pushed him into one of those rustic seats, which some kindly summerer had erected for the common good and as a means of exposing his name,—an advertisement of his inexpensive philanthropy. The Professor made no resistance. He was busily talking to himself about things which may have had to do with motoring, but his language was too dense for us to comprehend its meaning.

Returning to the car, Jim asked with emphasis, "Who's been monkeying with this machine?"

"I have," answered the Professor. "I spent half the night inspecting it, and have discovered many imperfections in the equipment and adjustment, which, fortunately, I was able to correct with the tools at my command."

"Did you take out that carburetor?" asked Jim, while his face reddened.

"Yes," replied the Professor. "I borrowed one of a neighboring car, which embodied my ideas of what a carburetor should be."

"What did you do with the one that was there?" shouted Jim, as his face twitched and his fists grew in size.

"I put it in back somewhere."

Jim fished it out from under the rear seat, and in a few moments had it in place.

"Who in thunder changed those spark plugs?"

"I substituted some I always carry with me," remarked the Professor calmly.

Jim turned to Don, and, holding himself together with a mighty effort, while his whole body pulsated with anger, said, "Mr. Bennett, may I express myself? I've got a say inside of me, and I'll choke if I don't let it come out."

"Go ahead," replied Don, as he winked at us.

Jim gave his trousers a hitch, strode up to where

the Professor sat, and let loose a torrent of mixed metaphor, which would have cracked the receiving plate of a phonograph, and smashed to smithereens the talking end of a telephone. His words poured out of him in a breathless stream of emphatics. His body swayed, and his legs danced accompaniments to his vociferation.

We sat in the car, while the tears poured down our cheeks. The Professor, absent with his thoughts, made no reply to what he didn't hear, but Jim remained on the firing line, pouring hot air and blasts of flame-curling scorn at him, until satisfied that the Professor was bomb-proof. Exhausted, and with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, he returned to the car. It took him an hour to get things back into place, and longer to restore his equilibrium. His hands and mouth spelled each other in competitive activity.

I have attended socialistic gatherings, have been scorched by political fireworks, and have been hit by the vocal bullets of peace-convention battles. But I never heard nor saw a display of word pyrotechnics which approached in volume or in intensity the lightning and thunder which Jim let loose upon the Professor. Untutored though he may have been, he exhausted the dictionary, and coined expressive words and sentences, until he had generated a sweeping fire, whose forked flames crackled and

roared as they belched forth from his over-heated interior.

At last, when the job had been finished and the motor was returned to normal, Jim threw himself upon the ground, closed his eyes, and whispered, "Won't somebody throw a pail of water over me? I smell smoke."

The Professor all the time was mumbling to himself. We called to him, but he heard us not.

"Guess we'll have to help him in," said Don. Here's your chance, Jim. Get the Professor into the car."

Jim sprang to his work. With rolled-up sleeves and fire in his eyes, he gathered the Professor unto himself, and fairly hurled him into the back seat.

The Professor pulled himself together, and remarked quietly, "Yes, I must be correct in my analysis of the coherent relations of——"

Gently Tom placed his handkerchief on the Professor's mouth, and held it there, while the Professor, to the music of his own mumbling, went off to sleep.

We struck a sandy road, so soft that it looked as though the wheels couldn't turn us through. For half an hour we seemed to be in a treadmill, the poor engine doing its best to make the wheels advance.

"Get out back, and talk to it," suggested Don, as he looked at Walt. "Deliver that speech you

worked off at the convention of women's clubs. The machine will do its best to get away."

"If my speech won't start it," remarked Walt drily, "you get out ahead and let go one of your jokes. If there is a spark of get-there in the car, it will run you down."

"Rub some of your anti-skid psychology on the tires, Arch," suggested Tom.

Meanwhile Jim had so maneuvered that the car worked itself out of the depth of sand, and we were again speeding between the no longer tree-protected mountains, which commercial highwaymen had stripped and mutilated.

We had procured a lunch at one of those country tea rooms, which serve city meat and milk fresh from the condensery; for that peculiar and mysterious tabulation of misinformation, the auto guide, had hinted at the possibility of the absence of good dining places.

"We'll stop here and eat," said Don, as we entered a glen which had escaped the woodchoppers.

Jim took charge of the eatables. Spreading robes upon the grass, and using the unread pages of the papers we had bought for tablecloths, he gave an appetizing appearance to the canned and cartoned food we had purchased. For the looks of things does count mightily, especially when you have to eat them.

Surrounded by the whispering pines and the singing water (permission to use these words obtained from the "New Century Magazine"), it seemed to us that wilted crackers were as crisp as sun-kissed codfish, and that the confined meat smelled of the freshness of just gathered roses.

CHAPTER XXXVI

TOM was a deep-stained Republican, so thoroughly dyed that all the laundries in the world working overtime couldn't have bleached out his bias. Walt was an iron-clad and metal-shod Democrat, who would rather be kicked by his party donkey than ride to victory on the back of the Republican elephant. Arch was one of those undependable, vacillating, front-advancing, backsliding, never-stick-anywhere Independents. It was good for him that he was, because it kept his bump of reason on the move and gave his psychological faculties opportunity to exercise.

Don wasn't a Republican, or a Democrat, or a Political Independent. He was a citizen, one of those unusual and peculiar fellows who stood for men and measures, giving preference to one of the great parties unless conditions were too raw and rank to permit a decent man to cast a ballot of self-respect at its polls. Then he held his nose, and voted for the opposite candidate.

After we had sat awhile, enjoying the good digestion which follows appetite, thinking of nothing save our own thoughts,—the preposition may be

omitted,—and watching the curling and ringing of the smoke which came from our pipes, Tom remarked:

"..... ....."

The report of this discussion will not appear in this or any other book. There are times when discretion is the better part of me, and I'm not going to antagonize the book-buying public, which may, in a moment of irresponsibility, buy the book, if it judges it by appearances.

Then, what is to be gained by recording it? Take any political discussion,—don't select it, but collar it as it comes,—photograph it upon a plate that is not sensitive, and then expose the plate to a dozen more, and you won't blur the impression. They're all alike, different only in the variance and peculiarities of their illogical presentation.

Because a partisan doesn't know why he is a partisan, he hasn't any idea of what is wrong with his party or what is good about the others.

And the Independent,—he is like a weather-beaten vane, never pointing to anywhere in particular, but just swinging about, sure to-day and sorry for it to-morrow.

Instead, I will report a wrangle over a not-yet unraveled puzzle, with an answer, which, when discovered, will not be worth what it cost to get it. Queer, is it not, that men of mind, and men of

money, and men with some of both, and men with none of either, will burn good oil trying to locate the answer of what isn't worth the solution?

The foregoing sentences pleased me. There seemed to be a ring about them, which sounded good to my ears. Smooth, are they not? And slightly adulterated with the scholarly? Mighty good chance, thought I, for the display of flowery literature, which grows so abundantly in the hot houses of modern story.

I give you my most solemn word that when I penned these lines, I thought I could deliver the goods, but I can't. Really, I fail to summon any subject that will illustrate what I believed I was going to accomplish when I inadvertently took chances with what I thought I possessed. I fell into a self-made trap, and in the fall, its ragged edges stripped me of my conceit, stranded me upon the bars just outside the sea of brilliancy. I am stuck, that's all.

Is it not better manfully to admit my Waterloo, than to make a bluff attempt to puncture the impregnable rocks before me, and lacerate myself, that the reader my laugh at my just punishment?

Years ago my weather-beaten nose of inquiry taught me to anchor when there was fog ahead.

The auto is running smoothly. The air is cool and bracing. The sunbeams are dancing on the

mountain streams. There is no rain in the soft blue of the sky, and the earth needs no watering. The gentle breezes are playing among the trees, and all the world in sight is dressed in holiday attire, and without a suggestion of the shadows whose falling is not thought of, as we, in full fellowship, and drinking from out the brimming cup of cheerfulness, bowl along the highway of pleasure.

Why take chances with the morrow? Why interfere with to-morrow's business? Why give the Professor opportunity to block the motor? Why allow Tom to repeat his many-time-told stories? Why permit Walt to touch the trigger of our sensitiveness? Why retard Don in his money-making?—for we may need his savings next year. Why not let Arch's reason rest in the seclusion of its palpitating self? Why not give Jim a vacation?

So now, in the quiet of the retiring day, when the air is sleepy and the birds are still, I will not longer suppress the call for silence, but will say

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